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CRITIQUES OF CONFUCIUS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHINA,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COMMUNIST PERIOD



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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>KMJP</u>	<u>Kuang-ming jih-pao</u> 光明日報 (Kuang-ming Daily).
<u>JMJP</u>	<u>Jen-min jih-pao</u> 人民日報 (People's Daily).
<u>HCN</u>	<u>Hsin ch'ing-nien</u> 新青年 (New Youth).
<u>CHYC</u>	<u>Che-hsüeh yen-chiu</u> 哲學研究 (Philosophical Research).
<u>LSYC</u>	<u>Li-shih yen-chiu</u> 歷史研究 (Historical Research).
<u>HC</u>	<u>Hung-ch'i</u> 紅旗 (Red Flag).
<u>HCS</u>	<u>Hsin chien-she</u> 新建設 (New Construction).
<u>KTCHTLC</u>	<u>K'ung-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun chi</u> 孔子哲學討論集 (Collected Articles on Confucius' Philosophy), Che-hsüeh yen-chiu p'ien-chi-pu (ed.), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1963.

PREFACE

While the use of dichotomies can lead all too easily to the kind of oversimplifications made by Joseph Levenson in his analysis of modern Chinese thought, they do nevertheless provide a useful structure for exploring history.¹ The two opposing forces of change and tradition have been in sharper conflict in China in this century than at any other time in her history.

The forces for change found their origin largely in the painful realisation that no matter how glorious and great Chinese culture was, it crumbled not only before western powers but also to the hitherto insignificant neighbour, Japan. The controversy over the necessity for change was settled largely by the turn of events. As Lu Hsün aptly remarked, it is not whether we can preserve the national essence, but whether it can preserve us.² The question of what kind of changes should occur, and how to bring about this change, brought forth a variety of answers. The desire for modernisation led to numerous blueprints and

1. Philip Huang has already challenged Levenson's Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China as being "too neat and simple." See Huang, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972, p. 204. Similar charges could be made of Levenson's other works, particularly Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy, probably the best known book on this subject in English.

2. Lu Hsün 鲁迅, "Je feng" 热风 (Hot Wind), Lu Hsün ch'uan-chi 鲁迅全集 (Complete Works of Lu Hsün), Vol. 2, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-p'an-she, 1973, p. 25.

plans laid down by intellectuals and political figures of all persuasions and shades of opinion. The same diversity of thought became apparent in the twin question of evaluating tradition. What exactly tradition represented, what needed to be changed, and whether it should be entirely abandoned: all of these questions produced a range of answers. Whatever answer was given, however, it was generally agreed the question of tradition came down to a question of Confucianism. But even amongst those most critical of the effects of Confucianism there has been a wide variety of interpretations of what Confucius himself had stood for. In particular, was his philosophy intrinsically at fault, or had it only been misused by later generations?

This thesis seeks to explore the changing evaluations made of Confucius over the course of this century. It is not an attempt to prove or disprove the validity of these arguments, but to place them in the historical context in which they were made, seeking to explain why these changes occurred.

The central thesis which I want to argue is that the anti-Confucius movement in the past few years, while in many ways putting forward a new approach, also represented the culmination of a process that had begun with the modernisation of China. Even within the communist period there have been changes in evaluations made of Confucius, and I will further argue that changes which occurred during the Cultural Revolution

were incompatible with many of the evaluations made of Confucius during the fifties and sixties, and that this in itself necessitated an anti-Confucius movement. This is not to say, however, that political factors were not also important.

While the more general topic of Confucianism in twentieth century China is very interesting, it is too wide in scope for a thesis of this size. I have thus chosen to concentrate on the arguments put forward by intellectuals. I have therefore not included discussions of such popular movements as the Taiping uprising, nor of the great volume of criticisms put out by peasants and workers during the anti-Confucius campaign.

I have divided the period into two parts, with the first part dealing with pre-1949 evaluations and thus serving as an introduction. The second part deals with the communist period as the main concern of the thesis.

Whereas in the introduction, I have tried to integrate the historical forces acting on the writers with a description of the kinds of criticism they made, in the second part, I have divided each period into four sections with the first section dealing with the historical background and the other three sections with particular criticisms and evaluations of Confucius. I have organised the latter discussion around the three topics of class, ethics, and education.

The topic of Confucius' class background was chosen because it has been taken as a fundamental question in China in evaluating an individual's contribution to history. In Marxist analysis,

it is considered important to be able to place an individual in a particular class to decide, for example, whether he was progressive or reactionary. This will depend, too, at what stage this class is in history, whether it is declining or whether it is newly arising.

The second topic of Confucian ethical concepts was chosen because of their importance in Confucian thought. Concepts such as "jen" are central to Confucian thinking, and as a result they were topics most discussed both before and after the Cultural Revolution.

The third topic, the question of Confucius' ideas on education, is of interest partly because of the contrast it provides on views held before and after the Cultural Revolution. It most clearly illustrates the differences in opinion that occurred. This was no doubt influenced by the great changes that took place in educational theorising and practice as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

The Wade-Giles system of romanization is used throughout except for a few commonly accepted alternatives like Chiang Kai-shek. Translations in this thesis are my own unless otherwise stated. I have not translated some terms such as jen (generally rendered as love, benevolence etc.) and li (generally rendered as rites, propriety etc.) where their meaning was the focus of debate. For consistency, I have relied on James Legge's translation of the Analects wherever possible.³

3. James Legge, The Four Books, Hong Kong: The Chinese Book Co., no date.

Chapter I

PRE-1949 CRITIQUES OF CONFUCIUS

Late Ch'ing Appraisals of Confucius

The Opium Wars began the process of the disintegration of the traditional Chinese social system. Before the nineteenth century, China had not been interested in buying western goods, nor had Europe been industrialised enough to want to unload surplus produce overseas. The British success in forcing the Chinese to import opium acted as a catalyst. In the period after the Opium Wars, a determined effort was made by the western powers, particularly Great Britain, to sell manufactured goods to China.

The economic changes that this brought about were not the only significant effects of western domination. The easy victories gained first by the British and then by every other nation that fought with China forced the Chinese to reassess their traditional disdain for "foreign barbarians". Even as early as the First Opium War, Lin Tse-hsu¹, who had been commissioned to stop the opium trade, realised the need to imitate the west, at least militarily. While in Canton, he "planned to buy in secret western copper cannons and iron cannons manufactured by the barbarians."¹

1. Quoted in Feng Yu-lan 馮友蘭, "Ya-p'ien chan-cheng yü Lin Tse-hsu" 鴉片戰爭與林則徐 (The Opium War and Lin Tse-hsu), in Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an she (ed.), Chung-kuo chin-tai ssu-hsiang shih lun-wen chi 中國近代思想史論文集 (Collected Articles on the History of Modern Chinese Thought), Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1958, p. 8.

While Lin and other important figures of his time were interested in fighting the west with western means, they remained staunch Confucianists, whose aim above all was to preserve traditional Chinese values.² When the Taiping uprising was suppressed, one of the justifications that was given was that the rebels' anti-Confucianism and advocacy of a foreign religion threatened the traditional pattern of life.

Foreign technology and military science, it was felt, should be learned precisely to ensure that foreign ideas would not take root in China. Paradoxically, it was men like Tseng Kuo-fan and Lin Shu,³ both adherents of the T'ung-ch'eng P'ai, a literary school which advocated the Confucian doctrine that "the Heavens may change, but the Way never changes," who were foremost in the attempts to introduce western technology and literature into China.⁴ Despite their professed aim of preserving tradition, these conservatives unintentionally helped to erode the system they tried to protect.

2. Studies of important thinkers from the Opium War to the May Fourth movement can be found in ibid.

3. The ambiguous role played by Lin Shu, who, though a staunch conservative, nursed "romantic" aspirations, is portrayed in Leo Lee, The Romantic Generation of Modern Chinese Writers, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.

4. The T'ung-ch'eng P'ai 桐城派 was basically concerned with literary criticism. A particularly good treatment is found in Kuo Shao-yü 郭紹虞, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh p'i-p'an-shih 中國文學批評史 (A History of Chinese Literary Criticism), Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1947, Vol. 2, pp. 354-452.

Towards the end of the last century, intellectuals were beginning to move away from traditional Confucianism. In the guise of reinterpreting Confucianism, they began to propagate new values. The most important of these new evaluations was that proposed by K'ang Yu-wei. K'ang, who had been involved in attempts to persuade the Ch'ing emperor to push through a series of reforms similar in spirit to those of the Meiji Restoration in Japan, faced the problem of reconciling his ideas of reform with Confucianism. He tried to do this by claiming that Confucianism had become corrupted over the centuries, so that the true meaning of Confucianism had become lost. This kind of argument allowed him to criticise those features of the traditional system which he felt were keeping China backward, while at the same time remaining loyal to Confucius.

To support his views, K'ang in 1890 wrote A Study of the Forged Classics of the Hsin Dynasty in which he argued that all of the Old Text classics had been forged by Liu Hsin to buttress Wang Mang's rule of the Chinese Empire.⁵ He also drew on the arguments put forward by Tung Chung-shu who in the second century B.C. had interpreted the Spring and Autumn Annals in a mystical light, rather than seeing them, in the more orthodox way, as simply a straightforward historical account. Tung had argued

5. K'ang Yu-wei 康有為, Hsin-hsüeh wei-ching k'ao 新學偽經考 (A Study of the Forged Classics of the Hsin Dynasty), Peking: ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1956.

that if the Annals were read in conjunction with Kung-yang Commentary, it revealed that Confucius had had a conception of a "new king".

Tung Chung-shu's conception of Heaven had also been somewhat mystical, fusing Confucianism with the concept of yin yang. These kinds of views which the New Text school were to utilise, while very different to the orthodox stream of Confucian thinking, had nevertheless been an important minor stream of thought in China for nearly two thousand years.⁶

Having rejected a considerable proportion of the classics as based on forgeries, K'ang Yu-wei began the task of replacing them with something else. Unlike the earlier Taipings or the later May Fourth iconoclasts, however, he was careful to denounce only the Old Text interpretation of Confucianism, without denouncing Confucius himself, in a manner reminiscent of his attempts to reform the Ch'ing court while remaining loyal to the Manchu emperor.

In the first paragraph of Confucius as a Reformer K'ang expressed his astonishment that after two thousand years, Confucius' teaching had still not brought peace and prosperity to China, further proof to him that Confucius had been

6. The "Old Texts" were supposed to have been discovered in Confucius' old residence during the reign of Ching Ti (156 B.C. - 140 B.C.) of the Han Dynasty. Under Liu Hsin, they slowly replaced the then current classics (the "New Texts") as the mainstream of intellectual life until the second half of the eighteenth century.

misinterpreted.⁷ K'ang formulated the theory that Confucius had actually been a sagely reformer sent by the Black Emperor, one of the heavenly kings in order

to save the people from misery, to become the Spiritual Guide, the Sagely King, the Everlasting Teacher, the Protector of the People, and the High Priest of the World.⁸

K'ang Yu-wei also believed that Confucius had predicted that three thousand years after him, another sage would arise who would proclaim the teachings of the Great Commonwealth. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that K'ang saw himself as this great sage, since he was the author of a work titled The Book of the Great Commonwealth.⁹ This work contains a lucid exposition of the kind of society that K'ang believed would result from the practice of genuine Confucianism. In his view this utopia would be reached through a series of progressive stages which would gradually eliminate all sufferings and erase all boundaries between people.

This ideal society would be egalitarian, treating old and young, men and women alike, and would have a representative government. Such a utopian vision of the future was by the beginning of the twentieth century no longer new, and many

7. K'ang Yu-wei, K'ung-tzu kai-chih k'ao 孔子改制考 (A Study of Confucius as a Reformer), T'ai-wan shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1968.

8. K'ang Yu-wei, ibid., p. 5.

9. K'ang Yu-wei, Ta-t'ung shu 大同書 (The Great Commonwealth), Peking: Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1956.

writings on this subject must have reached China from Europe. The originality of K'ang's formulation lay in his belief that Confucius had been the architect of such plans. However, there seems little justification for this interpretation of Confucius, since nowhere in the whole of traditional Confucian writings or in the Analects itself is there any suggestion that there should be equality between the sexes or that there should be abolition of family hierarchies.

K'ang's interpretation of Confucius was a result of his political beliefs, rather than arising out of a detailed analysis of Confucius' thinking. The failures of the earlier reformers who had opted for "Chinese learning for substance and western learning for use" enabled him to perceive that unless Chinese culture itself was re-examined and scrutinised, any reform was bound to be unsuccessful. However, his reverence for Confucianism, like his reverence for the monarchical system, led him to criticise the Confucianists without attacking Confucius himself. The position that K'ang Yu-wei found himself in could be compared to that of Martin Luther in the beginning of the Reformation. While their responses were somewhat similar, however, Luther succeeded in reviving Christianity while K'ang's attempt to revive Confucianism failed, perhaps because K'ang faced powerful alien adversaries whereas Luther did not.

In the end, the effect of K'ang Yu-wei's moves were to lead to results precisely in opposition to his initial aims.

While he tried to reinvigorate Confucianism by departing from the orthodox Confucian stream, his attacks on the Confucianists in the process further weakened their position. His act of defiance against orthodoxy could ultimately only harm the image of Confucius.

K'ang thus could not solve the contradiction he faced: that of fighting Confucius with Confucius. He only managed to save his own life in 1898 by going into exile. The failure of the 1898 reform movement also marked the end of his role as a progressive innovator, after this,

He became more and more a fervent admirer of Confucius and an obstinate partisan of constitutional monarchy - which is why he was one of the champions of the opposition to 'science' and 'democracy', the two slogans born with the Republic of 1911.¹⁰

While K'ang was the most eminent of the late Ch'ing thinkers who sought to rejuvenate Confucianism through a reinterpretation, he was by no means alone. One of his most outstanding students, T'an Ssu-t'ung, also wrote influential works on this topic, but while K'ang fled to exile, T'an was one of the six men executed after the attempted coup of 1898.

T'an expounded his philosophical theories in his major work: A Study of Jen. His exposition of jen, though, involved a substantially different interpretation of this Confucian concept. He gave it a pseudo-scientific name of "ether":

10. O. Briere, S.J., Fifty Years of Chinese Philosophy 1898-1950, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956, pp. 14-15.

It has no name, but we will call it 'ether'. As made manifest in action, Confucius variously referred to it as love (jen), as the 'power of originating growth', or as the nature (hsing). Mo Tzu referred to it as universal love (chien ai). The Buddha referred to it as the Buddha-nature, and as compassion and mercy (tzu pei). Jesus referred to it as spirit (ling hun), and as loving others as oneself and regarding one's enemies as if they were friends. The scientists refer to it as the power of love and attraction. It is all these different things, and through it the realm of physical phenomena comes to be, that of empty space is established, and that of sentiment beings issues forth.¹¹

This interpretation was even more heretical than the views of K'ang Yu-wei. T'an's avowed worship of Confucius had been reduced to that of a universal ideal. He personally condoned the view that "the founders of the three religions (Confucianism, Christianity, and Buddhism) are all one. When I bow to one, I bow to them all."¹²

Like K'ang Yu-wei, T'an also theorised about an ideal society in the form of a Great Commonwealth, and he also began to advocate many values quite at odds with Confucianism, despite his self-proclaimed adherence to Confucius. Writing about family and social relationships, he stated,

As to the government of the Great Unity, it is not merely one in which a father is treated as a father or a son as a son, for the father-and-son (relationship)

11. T'an Ssu-t'ung 譚嗣同, Jen hsieh 仁學 (A Study of jen), translation taken from Feng Yu-lan, A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 2, tr. Derk Bodde, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953, p. 693.

12. Translation from ibid., p. 705.

is then no longer in existence, let alone that of the ruler and subject. (In this age) all those gagging institutions and confining bonds which make autocrats of the rulers, and robbers of the people, are no longer allowed to be applied.¹³

The two fundamental Confucian relationships of father and son, ruler and subject had thus been reduced to their antithesis. It is evident that T'an Ssu-t'ung was also drawing on western concepts of equality alien to orthodox Confucian thought, in much the same way as K'ang had. Despite their protestations to the contrary, their writings represented the first signs of dissent from Confucianism by intellectuals, albeit subtly disguised and without conscious motivation on the part of the authors.

Their repudiation of all of Confucianism after the Han Dynasty could only alienate conservative Confucianists. Their attempts to replace a "forged Confucius" with a "genuine" one could not succeed either because they depended on extensive borrowing from the west. The reforms which they tried to introduce in 1898 undermined long established institutions like the civil service examinations which had helped to keep Confucianism alive for two thousand years. Most importantly, the introduction of western learning and technology created an environment which was in the long run hostile to Confucian tradition.

13. This translation is taken from Bodde, p. 704. He has translated ta-t'ung as the Great Unity, but I prefer the expression "Great Commonwealth".

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao was another close associate and disciple of K'ang Yu-wei who had participated in the 1898 reform movement. Before he went into exile, Liang had already read translations of western works. During his stay in Japan, Liang had access to a lot more translations of western works in Japanese, which had a decisive influence on his ideas. He was also influenced by Japanese thinkers themselves. In 1902-3 Liang outlined his ideal of the role of a citizen in a good society, in much the same way T'an Ssu-t'ung had in his Study of Jen. Philip Huang comments that Liang Ch'i-ch'ao

proceeded to exhort all Chinese to adopt a new system of values. His two themes were the "spirit" of "liberty" and nationalism. Each individual must trust his own thoughts and not depend on the authority of the sages of the past; he must not be "the slave of custom," the "slave of his environment," or the "slave of his passions and desires." Another aspect of this independent "spirit" was the "consciousness of rights." The "new citizen" must not wait to have his rights bestowed upon him by a benevolent ruler; he must actively seek their guarantee in law for himself.¹⁴

Liang's conception of the "new citizen" bore no real resemblance to the prototype of the Confucian gentleman. Apart from this, the many essays Liang wrote advocating constitutional government struck at the very roots of the Confucian system. Liang, who had supported the 1911 revolution, was to see his dream of a constitutional republic collapse, as K'ang Yu-wei saw his hopes of a constitutional monarchy based on a state religion of Confucianism end in failure.

¹⁴. Philip C. Huang, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Modern Chinese Liberalism, p. 65.

While Liang Ch'i-ch'ao had moved further away from the position K'ang Yu-wei had adopted, like T'an Ssu-t'ung he saw the historical Confucius as essentially progressive, although his teachings had been abused by a succession of despotic rulers. By the beginning of the twentieth century, however, another associate of K'ang Yu-wei, Chang T'ai-yen, began to write essays which downgraded Confucius' position by placing him on a par with other classical Chinese philosophers. Chang argued that Mo Tzu and the Taoists had been just as knowledgeable as Confucius and that "Hsün Kuang's learning surpassed that of Confucius, though he called the latter his teacher."¹⁵

Chang T'ai-yen also argued with K'ang over his support for the emperor Kuang Hsü, whom Chang referred to as "a young clown who was incapable of distinguishing between beans and wheat."¹⁶ Chang believed that the Manchus had worshipped Confucianism because it could be used as a means of stupefying the people,¹⁷ and that K'ang in supporting Confucianism had played into their hands. Chang T'ai-yen had thus put forward

15. Chang T'ai-yen 章太炎, "Ting K'ung" 訂孔 (Reevaluating Confucius), in Chang T'ai-yen shih-wen hsüan-chu 章太炎詩文選注 (An Annotated Selection of Chang T'ai-yen's Poems and Essays), Vol. 1, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1976, p. 169.

16. Chang T'ai-yen, "Po K'ang Yu-wei lun ke-ming-shu" 駁康有為論革命書 (Repudiating K'ang Yu-wei's Letter on Revolution), in ibid., p. 267.

17. Ibid., p. 254.

one of the first explicit criticisms of Confucius, although in a mild way.

The late Ch'ing thinkers laid the grounds for later re-evaluations of Confucius, although they themselves were to reject these later interpretations. They had been reformers, not revolutionaries, and they had never intended any repudiations of Confucius. In bringing into doubt the authenticity of the classics as historical fact, however, they opened up the possibility of a re-interpretation of history and hence of Confucius. This meant in the long run that Confucianism could be objectively analysed, instead of being simply accepted as a doctrine.

Their interpretations of Confucius were in no sense remote scholarly exercises. Indeed, they used their evaluations as a political tool to introduce and strengthen the reformist ideas that they favoured. In this, they drew inspirations from western thought, for unlike earlier reformers like Tseng Kuo-fan and Chang Chih-tung who were only prepared to use western technology, men of the ilk of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao were prepared to admit of the need to also take an interest in western philosophy and social institutions. This interest almost of necessity meant that their interpretations of Confucianism would begin to depart from orthodoxy.

The Anti-Confucian Movement of the May Fourth Period

The overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty was followed by a

very short-lived attempt to reduce the influence of Confucianism,¹⁸ but it was not long before Yüan Shih-k'ai, proceeding along the same lines of the Ch'ing government, tried to use Confucianism as a base to build his power. Yüan was by no means an exception amongst the political leaders of the early Republican period, for on the whole their evaluations of Confucius were quite positive. They received support from K'ang Yu-wei. K'ang, who had presented a memorial to the throne arguing that Confucianism should be made into a state religion, continued to argue that Confucianism should be established as an official religion, wanting to see provision for this in the constitution of the newly established Republic.¹⁹

While in the late Ch'ing period, progressive thinkers still looked to Chinese tradition as a means for strengthening China, by the second decade of this century this was no longer the case. A series of national catastrophes culminating in the Twenty-one Demands presented by Japan had caused many young people to become disillusioned with the whole notion of the superiority of Chinese civilisation and with the belief that a policy of "Chinese learning for substance and western learning for use" could be sufficient to save China from further

18. This was most clearly demonstrated by the changes in education under Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei. But the anti-Confucian reform during the initial period of the Republic was so brief that T. Kobayashi refers to it as another "Hundred Days' Reform" in his "Some Political Aspects of the Problem of Confucian State Religion", The Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia, Vol. 7, Nos. 1 and 2, p. 52.

19. Ibid., p. 58.

humiliations. By this time, many intellectuals had begun to return from studies abroad, with newly acquired knowledge of "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy".²⁰ Ch'en Tu-hsiu returned from Japan in 1915, and in the following year Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei came back from France, and Hu Shih from the United States. Armed with some of the most advanced western theories of the time, they proceeded to bombard Chinese tradition, choosing Confucianism as the main target.

I Pai-sha was the first of this new generation of intellectuals to attack Confucianism.²¹ In an article which appeared in New Youth early in 1916, he referred to K'ang Yu-wei's ideas on Confucian religion to attack the concept of Confucius as an uncrowned king.²² In this article, he attacked not only the institutional forms of Confucianism, but also the writings of Confucius. He contended that Confucius in identifying the emperor with heaven had given unlimited authority to the emperor, thus promoting an autocratic society.²³

20. These were the two nicknames given to the two principles by Ch'en Tu-hsiu in his defence of HGN in January 1919.

21. I have described the May Fourth movement as anti-Confucian as distinct from the anti-Confucius movement of the seventies because whereas the main thrust of the recent movement seemed to have been directed against Confucius himself, the movement in the May Fourth period was directed more against Confucianism in general.

22. For the term su-wang 素王 (Uncrowned king), see K'ang Yu-wei's introduction to his "Li-yün chu" 禮運注 (Commentary on the Evolution of Rites), in Pu-jen tsa-chih hui-p'ien, Vol. 2 孔氏集注通編 (Collected Writings from the Journal of Pu-jen) Taipei: Hua-wen reprint, 1968, p. 721.

23. I Pai-sha 易白行, "K'ung-tzu p'ing-i" Part 1 孔子評議 (Commentary on Confucius), HGN, February 1916, I, 6.

While I Pai-sha was at the forefront of the attacks on Confucianism as a religion, it was Ch'en Tu-hsiu who was to make the most systematic and thorough criticisms. In 1916, when K'ang Yu-wei defended the inclusion of Confucian teachings in the constitution, Ch'en Tu-hsiu attacked his arguments in a series of articles. Yüan's attempt to use Confucianism to declare himself emperor had led to indignation amongst the intellectual youth, for whom the issues of reintroducing Confucianism as a state religion and monarchism had come to be closely linked. Although by this time Yüan Shih-k'ai was dead, in an article entitled "Restoration and Reverence for Confucius", Ch'en Tu-hsiu argued that advocating Confucianism as a state religion could only lead to a return of the monarchy. "Confucian religion and republicanism", he wrote, "are two things which cannot co-exist to have one means to abandon the other."²⁴

In a second article in 1917, Ch'en wrote that Confucianism could not be regarded as a religion because "it does not discuss life and death, nor does it mention ghosts and spirits."²⁵ He argued against the idea that any religion or thought should be included in a national constitution. He felt that this would make the Chinese constitution a laughing stock, since no other

24. Ch'en Tu-hsiu 陳獨秀, "Fu-pi yü tsun-K'ung" 復辟與尊孔 (Restoration and Reverence for Confucius), HGN, August 1917, III, 5, p. 1.

25. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "Tsai-lun K'ung-chiao wen-t'i" 再論孔教問題 (More on the Problem of Confucian Religion), ibid., January 1917, II, 5, p. 2.

constitution in the world referred to the thought of a particular individual. He posed three rhetorical questions to illustrate the absurdity of the notion of including Confucianism in the constitution. These were firstly whether the Confucian concept of self-cultivation was compatible with republican constitutionalism, secondly whether Confucian morality had a place in the modern world, and lastly whether constitutions should contain directions on education and ethics.

Elsewhere, he argued that modern society progresses by means of science, a concomitant of this being that religions would naturally decline.²⁶ In Ch'en's view, one of the best aspects of western thought lay in its concept of rule by law, before which everyone was equal. Including a religion in the constitution would make those opposed to this religion ineligible to take part in elections, thus violating the concept of equality.²⁷

Ch'en's rejection of Confucianism as a state religion, then, was couched in terms of such western ideals as individual liberty, freedom of religion, and freedom of politics. At this stage, it was the result more of an acceptance of western

26. Ch'en's belief that science gives the best possible explanation of the world and the greatest happiness to human life is exemplified in "Jen-sheng chen-i" 人生真義 (The True Meaning of Life), *ibid.*, February 1918, IV, 2. Nearly all his writings before 1919 also reveal this view of the superiority and eventual triumph of science.

27. See Ch'en, "Hsian-fa yih K'ung-chiao" 憲法與孔教 (Constitutionalism and the Confucian Religion), *ibid.*, November 1916, II, 3, pp. 1-5.

liberal ideas than from any intrinsic dissatisfaction with Confucianism.

By this time Confucius had been relegated in the minds of many to the status of an ordinary mortal, whose own behaviour and ideas could be retrospectively scrutinised. The general opinion held that it was not so much Confucius who had been at fault, but rather, it was the way in which various rulers in Chinese history had used Confucian thought that was to blame, a conclusion surprisingly similar to that reached by the 1898 reformers. The May Fourth writers were, however, to draw different implications from this conclusion. Whereas the late Ch'ing reformers called for the revitalisation of Confucius, the intellectuals of May Fourth wanted to see the image of Confucius as a sage broken forever. This showed that in one generation, Chinese intellectuals had abandoned the idea of reviving Chinese tradition as a way to save China and were beginning to embrace western values.

Constitutionalism and religion were by no means the only issues discussed during the anti-Confucian movement of May Fourth. Criticisms of Confucianism was to encompass a whole range of topics. The concept of filial piety, one of the pillars of Confucian thought, was denounced over and over again during the May Fourth period. In 1919, Lu Hsün wrote a long article "How We Should Act as Fathers Today" which argued that filial piety should be relegated to the past. In an ironic vein, he claimed he did not want to frighten his elders, but rather was discussing

an issue between his generation and the next. In this, he expressed an attitude prevalent in that period: the belief that the older generation was too degenerate to be saved. He claimed that this older generation

not only don't want their sons and daughters to be liberated, they don't even want their children to liberate their offspring.²⁸

His answer to the question of how to bring up children was love and freedom - two conditions he recognised as difficult to fulfil in that period. He believed that part of the reason for the decay of the Chinese nation lay in the Confucian practice of "not departing from the ways of one's father for three years after his death."²⁹ If the ancient protozoa had followed this rule, he observed, evolution could not have occurred.

His most thorough denunciation of filial piety was in his critique of "Twenty-four Illustrations of Filial Piety", which outlined the story of twenty-four models of filial piety. He attacked each story individually. He commented, for example, that the story relating how one man had buried his infant son to save enough food for his mother made him feel relieved that

28. Lu Hsün 魯迅, (under the pseudonym T'ang Ssu 唐俟), "Wo-men hsien-tsai tsen-yang tsuo fu-ch'in" 我們現在怎樣做父親 (How We Should Act as Fathers Today), *ibid.*, November 1919, VII, 6, p. 562.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 559.

his own father had not been so filial.³⁰

Hu Shih also urged that the trappings and rituals surrounding filial piety should be discarded in an article about the ceremonies at his own mother's funeral. While insisting that his mother mattered a great deal to him, he simplified the procedures considerably to oppose what he believed were anachronistic rites.³¹

Wu Yü, described by Hu Shih as the "hero from Szechuan who single-handedly beat down the Confucius shop,"³² repeatedly claimed that filial piety was the basic reason why Confucianism had developed into a narrow, reactionary outlook. In his essay "The Family-clan System - Basis of Despotism", he contended that the Confucian concept of the state being ruled by the emperor and the family by the father was inappropriate in contemporary times. He likened "those filial children and obedient grandchildren of slaves of Confucius" to a mantis which, not knowing its own meagre strength, was trying to stop

30. Lu, "Erh-shih-ssu hsiao-t'u" 二十四孝圖 (Twenty-four Illustrations of Filial Piety), Lu Hsün ch'uan-chi 魯迅全集 (Complete Works of Lu Hsün), Vol. 2, Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1973, pp. 363-367.

31. Hu Shih 胡適, "Wo tui-yü sang-li te kai-ke" 我對於喪禮的改革 (My Reforms of the Funeral Rites), HCN, November 1919, VI, 6, pp. 568-577.

32. Hu Shih, "Wu Yü wen-lu hsü" 吳虞文錄序 (Preface to the Collected Essays of Wu Yü), in Wu Yü, Wu Yü wen-lu 吳虞文錄 (Collected Essays of Wu Yü), Shanghai: Ya-tung T'u-shu-kuan, 1921, p. vii.

the progress of world republicanism with its arms.³³ To Wu, all the faults and vices of traditional Chinese society, from the unquestioning obedience expected of the people to concubinage, resulted from the attitudes engendered by the practice of filial piety. "The effect of the idea of filial piety," he declared, "has been to turn China into a big factory for the production of obedient subjects."³⁴

The feeling that the young should take over from the old reflected a prevalent attitude amongst the younger intellectuals of that era. It was a spirit which directly contradicted the Confucian principle of reverence for the aged. In a period of rapid social change, it had become difficult for the older generation to keep up. Ch'en Tu-hsiu in "The Way of Confucius and Modern Life" pointed to this problem, showing how Chang Chih-tung had defied traditional Confucian teaching, only to face opposition in his time from K'ang Yu-wei, with K'ang in turn facing the opposition of the May Fourth generation.³⁵

33. Wu Yü, "Chia-tsu chih-tu wei tsun-chih chu-i chih ken-chü lun" 家族制度為專制主義之根據論 (The Family Clan System: Basis of Despotism). HCN, February 1917, II, 6, pp. 3-4.

34. Wu, "Shuo hsiao" 說孝 (On Filial Piety), in Wu Yü wen lu, p. 15. Translation by Chow Tse-tsung used here, from Chow, "Anti-Confucianism in Early Republican China", in Arthur Wright (ed.), The Confucian Persuasion, California: Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 305.

35. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "K'ung tzu chih tou yü hsien-tai sheng-huo" 孔子之道與現代生活 (The Way of Confucius and Modern Life), HCN, December 1916, II, 4, pp. 1-7, p. 1.

Here, not only were the basic liberal virtues of independence and individual rights stressed, but it was quite clear that a Social Darwinist appeal to the new replacing the old and the pragmatist appeal for favouring that which was most suitable influenced the rejection of filial piety. This view, which considered youth as superior to the old, Ch'en Tu-hsiu declared in the first issue of New Youth, was typically western,³⁶ and, in advocating it, he was striking at the very core of Confucianism.

Another issue which was heatedly debated was concerned with the position of women. At the turn of the century, when women in Europe and the United States were fighting for such causes as the right to vote, the subservient role of women in China, long justified by reference to Confucian teachings, remained largely unquestioned. In the writings of the late Ch'ing reformers, the status of women had already been referred to. By the May Fourth period, western theories on the position of women were becoming increasingly influential, and several journals appeared devoted to the question of women's emancipation.³⁷

36. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "Ching-kao ch'ing-nien" 敬告青年 (Call to Youth), ibid., I, 1, pp. 1-21.

37. Chow Tse-tsung has an annotated bibliography of some of the major women's journals in his Research Guide to the May Fourth Movement, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963. Examples are Nü-chieh chung 女界鐘 (Women's Bell), p. 64; and Hsin fu-nü 新婦女 (New Women), p. 76.

Thomas Kuo states that Ch'en Tu-hsiu was the first Chinese intellectual to openly advocate women's liberation.³⁸ By 1916, Ch'en was decrying the lack of independence of Chinese women, and the way in which they were regarded as property.³⁹ In "Confucianism and Modern Life", Ch'en listed a number of inequalities between the sexes which he attributed to the influence of Confucian tradition. Among these were the obligation of women to obey their husbands and sons; the injunction against women joining political parties; the expectation that women should remain pure and virtuous and that widows should not remarry; and such social customs as the prohibition against the two sexes passing things to each other directly. Ch'en contrasted these with western customs to support his argument that China was less advanced than the west on the position of women.⁴⁰

The concept of women's purity, taken by the May Fourth writers to be one of the central notions in Confucian theories on women, involved two related questions - the question of chastity and the question of widow remarriage.

Women's purity was attacked in 1918, after Chou Tso-jen translated an article by a Japanese poetess who had argued that while purity might reasonably be adopted as a hobby or habit,

38. Thomas C. Kuo, Ch'en Tu-hsiu and the Chinese Communist Movement, New Jersey: Seton Hall University Press, 1975, p. 66.

39. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "1916", HCN, January 1916, I, 5, p. 3.

40. Ch'en Tu-hsiu, "K'ung-tzu chih tou yih hsien-tai sheng-huo".

it should not be treated as a moral imperative.⁴¹ The article was praised by Hu Shih, who went on to attack Confucian theories on the position of women, being particularly critical of the praise accorded to women who committed suicide after the death of a husband or fiancé. Hu Shih contended that Confucianists had offered no reasonable justifications for this custom.⁴²

Lu Hsün also added his opinion to this debate. In "My Views on Chastity and Self-martyrdom", Lu Hsün stated that the reason why purity was only proposed for women was a reflection of the selfishness and weakness of Chinese men of the time, who, unable to withstand the onslaught of the west, encouraged their women to sacrifice themselves in their place.⁴³ In a much later article, he commented that the inferior position of women in China stemmed directly from Confucius' statement that

Of all people, women and small men are the most difficult to keep. If you are close, they lose their humility. If you keep them at a distance, they are discontented.⁴⁴

41. Chou Tso-jen 周作人, "Chen-ts'ao lun" 貞操論 (On Chastity), HCN, May 1918, IV, 5, pp. 386-394.

42. Hu Shih, "Chen-ts'ao wen-t'i" 貞操問題 (The Problem of Chastity), ibid., July 1918, V, 1, p. 13.

43. Lu Hsün, (under the pseudonym T'ang Ssu), "Wo chih chieh-lieh kuan" 我之節烈觀 (My Views on Chastity and Self-martyrdom), ibid., August 1918, V, 2.

44. This quote, which comes from the Analects, is used by Lu Hsün in his "Kuan-yü fu-nü chieh-fang" 關於婦女解放 (On the Liberation of Women), in Lu Hsün ch'üan-chi, Vol. 5, p. 194.

Such manifestations of Confucian ethics as the question of filial piety and the position of women were easily seen to be in contradiction to western liberal values. Naturally, they would come under attack by those who professed to stand for the new ethics. The central concepts of Confucianism, jen and li, however, were not attacked as vehemently.

Generally, these concepts were taken to refer to such abstract notions as moderation, benevolence, and righteousness, which were compatible with western principles.

Some of the Chinese radicals of the time, however, did attempt to explore the original meanings of these terms as well as criticising the kind of behaviour they had come to mean in practice. Wu Yü was one of these. His training in western law gave him the background to enable him to make a more detailed analysis of the implications of li. He argued that li as a concept subsumed a whole range of behavioural expectations, including loyalty to superiors and respect for one's elders. In this way, Confucians had been able to sustain a stratified society, where punishment was only used when li was violated.⁴⁵ Li was thus a set of moral behaviour which was not codified law. To the May Fourth radicals, this set of moral behaviour was manifested in the inequalities against women and youth.

This kind of analysis might have been expected to lead on to a discussion of the importance of adopting legal codes

45. Wu Yü, "Li lun" 禮論 (On li), HGN, May 1917, III, 3.

which would guarantee that everyone would be equal before the law. On the whole, though, the May Fourth intellectuals seemed to have assumed that the mere adopting of a constitution would solve all such problems.

Their main criticism was not so much directed against these concepts but rather reflected a concern that in practice these concepts were being abused. Many illustrations of discrepancies between theory and practice were put forward, drawing heavily on historical stories and other analogies.

Lu Hsün used several analogies to explain what he thought these concepts had come to mean in practice. Commenting on a friend's fear that scientists might one day invent a drug which could make a person willingly act as a slave and as a tool in warfare, Lu Hsün reflected that the sages of China had already dreamed of such a "golden age". To him, the teachings of the sages had in the end amounted to "the gentlemen use their minds, and the common men use their strength," that is, these ethical principles had only benefited one section of the population, with the others working as willing slaves.⁴⁶

In a much later article, Lu Hsün quoted two newspaper reports. One report gave details of a ceremony held in Shanghai to worship Confucius. In this gathering, Confucius' favourite music, Shao music, was played. The other newspaper item reported

46. Lu Hsün, "Ch'un mo hsien t'an" 春末閒談 (Chats in Late Spring), in Lu Hsün ch'uan-chi, Vol. 1, pp. 188-192.

a drought in Ningpo, where the people had to fight (causing one death) to get enough water to drink. From Confucius' saying that having heard Shao music, he "forgot the taste of meat for three months," Lu Hsün drew the conclusion that these incidents clearly illustrated the hypocrisy of Confucian ethics, which could praise a person who forgot the taste of meat for three months while others were dying of thirst.⁴⁷

His most startling attack on Confucian ethical principles was in the claim that jen and li in fact amounted to cannibalism, first put forward in the influential short story Madman's Diary. The "madman" in this story claimed that while a history book he was reading was full of Confucian virtues, after carefully going through it for half a night, he was able to see between the lines the two characters "eat men".⁴⁸ Wu Yü backed up this discovery in an article written shortly after the story was published by giving some historical examples where cannibalism had actually been justified by Confucian virtues such as jen and li.

Such extreme and bitter assaults on Confucianism were not to be witnessed again until the early seventies. They were the manifestations of the feelings of a whole generation of disenchanted young intellectuals who saw Chinese tradition as an obstacle in the way of modernisation, and they rejected any

47. Lu Hsün, "Pu-chih jou-wei ho pu-chih shui-wei" 不知肉味和不知水味 (Not Knowing the Taste of Meat and Not Knowing the Taste of Water), in Lu Hsün p'i-K'ung fan-ju wen-chi 魯迅批判孔及儒家輯 (A Collection of Articles Criticising Confucius and Opposing the Confucians by Lu Hsün), Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1975, pp. 84-86.

48. Lu Hsün, "K'uang-jen jih-chi" 狂人日記 (Madman's Diary), HCN, May 1918, IV, 5, pp. 414-424.

attempts to preserve or excuse it. This is most clearly illustrated in their renunciation of the type of thinking exemplified by K'ang Yu-wei.

The attack on Confucianism was based on philosophical frameworks then current in western thought: science, democracy, Social Darwinism, and pragmatism. The premises on which they based their analyses meant that each time a Confucian principle was compared with a western one, they took the latter as the standard with which to judge the former. This uncritical acceptance of western liberal values was most pronounced early in the May Fourth period, but many intellectuals were to turn away from it very quickly, with some becoming immersed in traditional thinking again. The more significant group, however, was one which rejected liberalism but replaced it with another western philosophy, Marxism.

Post-May Fourth Controversies

In the twenties, the May Fourth spirit of iconoclasm gave way to more scholarly evaluations of tradition. Ku Chieh-kang and Ch'ien Hsüan-t'ung led a movement which called for a critical study of ancient writings and legendary figures, while Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Hu Shih began research into ancient Chinese culture with the professed aim of "rectifying the national heritage". Although these movements did not directly deal with the question of assessing Confucius, the "antiquity doubters"⁴⁹

⁴⁹. Ch'ien was so enthused with the idea of doubting everything ancient that in 1925 he changed his surname to "I-ku" (Antiquity Doubter).

in particular went beyond K'ang Yu-wei's claim that some classics were forged to look at all historical documents with a critical eye, questioning the authenticity of each. The long term effect of this was to help to destroy the traditional belief that Confucius himself had been near-perfect, and the Chou state he described a kind of ancient utopia.

A controversy which had immediate significance for the assessments of Confucius was initiated by the defenders of the so-called Eastern Civilisation. The early twenties also witnessed a drastic change in the attitudes in Europe. The destruction of the First World War left many western intellectuals in a state of despair. Many felt that western material and scientific progress was reaching its limits, contributing to "the decline of the west." Some of them looked to the presumed pacifism of the east as an alternative approach to life,⁵⁰ their enthusiasm in turn giving rise to a current of thought in Asia which claimed that the salvation of the world lay in the spiritual teachings of the east.⁵¹

Liang Ch'i-ch'ao, after a visit to Europe in 1918, declared that western civilisation was bankrupt. He challenged the assumptions of the earlier radicals, who had attacked

50. Bertrand Russell, for example, praised China in many of his articles after his return to England. See his book, The Problem of China, New York: Century Co., 1922.

51. This is discussed in some depth in Stephen N. Hay, Asian Ideas of East and West; Tagore and His Critics in Japan, China, and India, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Confucianism with the premise that "all of the universe is knowable and discernable by the laws of science."⁵² Liang on the contrary stated,

We are like travelers losing their way in a desert. They see a big black shadow ahead, and desperately run to it, thinking that it may lead them somewhere. But after running a long way, they no longer see the shadow and fall into the slough of despond. What is that shadow? It is this "Mr. Science." The Europeans have dreamed a vast dream of omnipotence of science; now they decry its bankruptcy.⁵³

The reaction against the replacement of tradition by "Mr. Science" and "Mr. Democracy" was strengthened by the arguments of Liang Sou-ming, who delivered a series of lectures at Peking University in 1920 and 1921 defending Eastern Civilisation. As an alternative to Ch'en Tu-hsiu's categorisation of eastern and western civilisations with the former being essentially passive and the latter active, Liang Sou-ming added the Indian type, which he claimed was based on the atrophy of the will.⁵⁴ Liang developed a scheme whereby the three civilisations pass through set stages, beginning with the western pattern and ending with the spiritual Indian one.

52. D.M.Y. Kwok, Scientism in Chinese Thought 1900-1950, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965, p. 21.

53. Translation from Chow Tse-tsung, The May Fourth Movement, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967, p. 328.

54. Liang Sou-ming 梁漱溟, Tung-hsi wen-hua chi ch'i che-hsüeh 中西文化及其哲學, Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1922.

He said, however, that both India and China had bypassed the first stage. Thus it was necessary to go back to it, but not uncritically as China had already a more advanced form of philosophy. He contended that the Chinese outlook on life should be preserved. By Chinese, Liang meant in fact Confucian, and his defence of Chinese tradition was a defence of Confucianism. When he wrote that "Confucius represents China, and Mo-tzu is a fitting example of the west,"⁵⁵ he was in effect saying that anything outside of Confucianism was not Chinese.

Liang's defence of Confucianism while spirited and detailed was nevertheless oversimplistic. He failed to provide an adequate rationale for his division of civilisations into the three types or for the progression of stages he believed they should pass through.

The publication of his book, based on the lectures he had given, incited a strong response from those intellectuals who advocated westernisation. Hu Shih attacked him for his generalisations, providing counter-examples to argue that

A civilisation is a life-style of a people, and the life-styles of any people is basically not very different.⁵⁶

55. Ibid., p. 196.

56. Hu Shih, "Tu Liang Sou-ming hsien-sheng te 'Chung-hsi wen-hua chi ch'i che-hsüeh'" 讀梁漱溟先生的「中西文化及其哲學」 (On Reading Mr. Liang Sou-ming's 'Eastern and Western Civilisations and Their Philosophies'), in idem, Hu Shih yü Chung-hsi wen-hua 胡適與中西文化 (Hu Shih and Eastern and Western Civilisations), Hong Kong: Lien-i shu-tien, 1974, p. 48.

Hu therefore perceived differences in civilisations as quantitative rather than qualitative. He claimed, for example, that the scientific method, which Liang Sou-ming had said was a characteristic of the west, was also evident in China.⁵⁷

Liang's defence of Confucianism coming so soon after the attacks made in the May Fourth movement, promoted debate amongst intellectuals for the next two decades. He was heavily criticised by both Communist writers⁵⁸ and the liberal intellectuals, with Hu Shih proposing "wholesale westernisation" as late as 1934.⁵⁹

In the thirties and forties, a less academic defence of Confucianism was found in Chiang Kai-shek's New Life Movement. After the counter-revolution of the Kuomintang in 1928, Chiang had turned more and more to Confucianism as an ideology to combat communism. In 1934, he made a speech launching the New Life Movement. This movement, according to those sympathetic to Chiang, sought "to reinvigorate Chinese society by adapting existing institutions or businesses to new needs."⁶⁰ To do this,

57. Ibid., pp. 49-50. He also wrote a book tracing the development of logical methods in ancient China. Hu Shih, The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China, 2nd Edn., New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1963.

58. See p. 47 of this thesis.

59. Hu Shih, "Chung-feng shih-chieh-hua yü ch'uan-p'an hsi-hua" 充分世界化與全盘西化 (On Full Universalization and Complete Westernisation), in Hu Shih, Hu Shih yü Chung-hsi wen-hua, pp. 139-142.

60. Paul M.A. Linebarger, The China of Chiang K'ai-shek: A Political Study, Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1943, p. 153.

Chiang advocated that the general populace should observe the four Confucian virtues Li, i, lien, and ch'ih.⁶¹ However,

The new Confucians of the Kuomintang were men of action, not philosophers. Chiang Kai-shek might quote the whole of the "great harmony" passage of the Record of rites to the People's Political Conference, and other leaders might refer in passing to any appropriate classical dictum, but Kuomintang leaders did not attempt to expound the Confucianism of the party in theoretical terms. They pulled from Confucianism, on an ad hoc basis, whatever seemed to promote internal order.⁶²

For the purposes of this thesis, which seeks to examine ideas rather than political action, this "distorted echo"⁶³ is only of passing interest.

A trend in the late twenties and thirties which while it did not deal directly with Confucius was to be of vital importance to the later assessments was the growth of Marxist thinking in China.⁶⁴

In those troubled years, it was only to be expected that leftist intellectuals would have little time or the facilities to do academic research and would be more concerned with writing which would arouse the people. Communist ideas therefore found expression mostly in discussions on revolutionary and mass

61. See ibid., pp. 150-151.

62. Mary Clabaugh Wright, The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957, pp. 305-306.

63. Ibid., p. 312.

64. This was reflected in the most influential journal of the May Fourth Era, New Youth. It became after the formation of the Communist Party an organ of the party propagating Marxist ideas.

literature,⁶⁵ although there were some scholarly studies of ancient China which were to become influential in later years in the evaluations of Confucius.

One of the first problems to occupy the minds of the early Marxist historians was the problem of the periodisation of Chinese history. In 1931 Kuo Mo-jo's A Study of Ancient Chinese Society was published. In the preface, Kuo explained that he had written the book to repudiate those who believed that China had a unique "national essence" and consequently a different pattern of development to other countries. He intended the book as a sequel to Engels' The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.⁶⁶

His (Engels') methodology is used as a guide. Apart from using the American Indians and Europe's ancient Greece and Rome as examples because he knew them, he has not mentioned ancient China once.⁶⁷

After examining the evidence in ancient books such as the Book of Change and the Book of History, Kuo came to the conclusion that the western Chou period had been the only period of slavery in Chinese history. Other self-professed Marxist historians like Teng T'o and Li Mai-mai also wrote articles and books on the

65. See Kam Louie, "Debates on Mass Literature 1930-1934", University of Sydney, unpublished thesis, 1974.

66. Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, New York: International Publishers, 1968.

67. Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若, Chung-kuo ku-tai she-hui yen-chiu 中國古代社會研究 (A Study of Ancient Chinese Society), Shanghai: Hsien-tai shu-chu, 1931, p. 6.

nature of ancient Chinese society.⁶⁸ These writings were the beginnings of a long drawn-out debate on the periodisation of Chinese history. At this stage, however, no connection was made between periodisation and evaluations of Confucius. Nevertheless, works on ancient China then were to set the tone for much of the discussions on Confucius which were written after the establishment of the People's Republic.

After the September 18 Incident, the attention of the intellectuals were drawn to the need to resist Japan and even fewer scholarly works on ancient history were published. Indeed, the situation in China during the Resistance War and the Civil War was so chaotic that the conditions placed enormous difficulties in the way of academic research. The odd book or two such as Yang Jung-kuo's studies on Confucius and Mo-tzu, therefore, would be better left as part of the early period of Communist scholarship.

68. Some of these have been later published in Teng T'o 鄧拓, Lun Chung-kuo li-shih te chi-ke wen-t'i 論中國歷史的幾個問題 (Several Problems on the History of China), Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1963. See also, Li Mai-mai 李季, Chung-kuo ku-tai cheng-chih che-hsüeh p'i-p'an 中國古代政治哲學批判 (A Critique of Ancient Chinese Political Philosophy), Shanghai: Hsin sheng-ming shu-chu, 1933.

Chapter II

THE FIFTIES

Historical Setting

In the first half of this century, Chinese intellectuals of both reformist and revolutionary persuasions had hoped to remedy the weaknesses they saw in China by replacing the traditional civilisation with a model which was either wholly western or in some way a compromise between western and traditional ideas. However, Chinese history in this period was chaotic, with the collapse of the empire followed by the warlord era, the war of resistance against Japan, and then the civil war. Almost inevitably intellectuals had become pawns of the changing political situation, unable to effectively implement their ideas.

The period after 1949 was to provide a measure of stability that would allow some of the changes envisaged by leftist intellectuals to be carried out. Those who had clamoured for reform could now work with a government which also wanted to change traditional society.¹ Leftwing

1. This is not meant to imply that all intellectuals had wanted change, or that stability had suddenly appeared in 1949. Chalmers Johnson's Communist Policies Towards the Intellectual Class, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1959, presents another point of view, using terms like "witch-hunt" and "brainwashing", to describe the fate of the intellectuals in China. Another interpretation is given by David Nivison, who stated in his "Communist Ethics and Chinese Tradition", in John Harrison (ed.), China: Enduring Scholarship Selected from the Far Eastern Quarterly - The Journal of Asian Studies 1941-1971, Vol. 1, pp. 207-230, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1972, that Confucian ethics and Communist ethics are not very different in practice

intellectuals like Chou Yang, Kuo Mo-jo and Mao Tun were soon given important posts in government or in academic institutions. While many distinguished scholars with either moderate or conservative attitudes had chosen to leave China, a great number of prominent historians and philosophers chose to stay, prepared to work with the new government if it could improve conditions in China, or at least prepared to wait and see.²

Replacing a traditional form of society with a socialist one meant that tradition, with Confucianism as its base, would eventually have to be reassessed. Answers would need to be found on such questions as whether traditional thought was at all compatible with the new ideology, and if so in what ways. However, this was not a task that was begun immediately. In the first few years of the new regime, there were far more pressing problems to occupy both intellectuals and leaders. Those intellectuals who were Marxists had positions of responsibility in government or in universities to occupy their time, while those who were not Marxists were beginning to study the new doctrine. Professors in Peking and Tientsin were

2. With regard to the remoulding of intellectuals active in cultural circles, Howard Boorman in 1952 pointed out that "to say that the movement is merely another aspect of the evolving pattern of ideological control in Communist China is certainly true, but tends to ignore the very relevant fact that many of these people have been, either actually or psychologically, with the Chinese Communists," "The Party Line in Literature and the Arts", Current Background, February, 1952, No. 156, p. 2.

reported to have spent twelve to fifteen hours a week in the study of Communist documents alone.³

As well, the early fifties saw a series of campaigns which affected intellectuals. In 1950 and 1951, much of the energy of the nation was turned to the "Resist America, Aid Korea" Campaign. This movement naturally had repercussions for the many scholars trained in America. While later movements like the 1952 "Three Antis and Five Antis" Campaign were directed at other groups in society, professors and academics were caught up in the turmoil and were obliged to make self-criticisms yet again. There was thus little time to spend on research nor was it certain what kind of research should be done.

Changes, especially in the first two years, occurred unevenly. In 1949, while on the one hand scholars like Feng Yu-lan were busy writing self-examinations, books like Liang Sou-ming's The Essential Features of Chinese Culture written in praise of traditional Chinese virtues could still be published.⁴ On the whole, while several older books on Chinese history and philosophy were reprinted in the early years,

3. New China News Agency, "Ideological reform movement among Peking and Tientsin professors enters second stage", Survey of China Mainland Press, 1952, No. 251, pp. 9-10.

4. Liang Sou-ming 梁漱溟, Chung-kuo wen-hua yao-i 中国
文化要义 (The Essential Features of Chinese Culture), Hong
Kong: Chi-ch'eng t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1963.

there was little new material on history or on Confucius.⁵ The material that was published tended to be revised or updated versions of earlier works, like Lü Cheng-yü's A History of Chinese Political Thought and Chou Ku-ch'eng's General History of China. In the new editions, the outline of the old texts were usually preserved, but the authors often included prefaces discussing the Marxist methodology which was now to be employed in studying history.⁶ Besides this, a number of articles were written by prominent historians like Chien Po-tsan setting out guiding principles for the study of history and historical figures, and discussing the use of such Marxist concepts as "the role of the masses" and "class struggle".⁷ These guides at the same time revealed that historians on the whole were struggling to master the new concepts, making it difficult for any definitive statement to be made on the assessment of historical figures or epochs.

5. Chan Wing-tsit, Chinese Philosophy, 1949-1963: An Annotated Bibliography of Mainland China Publications, Honolulu: East-West Centre Press, 1967, was only able to locate two books written specifically on Confucius between 1949 and 1953. Both these books, by Chao Chi-pin 趙紀彬 and by Yang Jung-kuo 楊榮國 had in fact originally been published before 1949.

6. See for example the contrasts in the prefaces between Chou Ku-ch'eng 周谷城 Chung-kuo t'ung-shih 中國通史 (General History of China), Vol. 1, reprinted in Hong Kong: Wen-luo ch'u-pan-she, no date, pp. 2-33, originally published in 1939; and Chung-kuo t'ung-shih 中國通史 (General History of China), Vol. 1, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1957, pp. 1-19.

7. Many of these articles are collected in Chien Po-tsan 翦伯贊, Li-shih wen-t'i lun-ts'ung 歷史問題論叢 (Collected Essays On Historical Problems), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1962.

By far the greatest thrust in publishing in these early years was in the printing of Marxist books, reflecting the fact that the leaders were far more interested in instilling new ideas than re-evaluating the old ones. Between 1949 and 1953, over fifteen million copies of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and twenty-five million copies of works by Mao were printed.⁸ The influence of Soviet ideas was equally important in the dissemination of Communist ideology, and Soviet intellectual trends were closely followed in China.

A speech by the Russian historian of ideas, Zdanov, in which he criticised G.F. Alexandrov for failing to stress the struggle between materialism and idealism in his history of Western European philosophy was widely reported in China,⁹ and was later to play an important role in discussions of Chinese philosophy. Even Pavlov's theories, because they were considered materialist, were given extensive treatment in the Chinese media.¹⁰ The extent of Russian influence can be

8. Liu Kuo-chün 劉國鈞, Chung-kuo shu-shih chien-p'ien 中國書史簡編 (A Brief History of Chinese Books), Peking: Kao-teng chiao-yu ch'u-pan-she, 1958, p. 143.

9. The Chinese New Philosophical Research Association of Peking University held two meetings in 1950 to discuss this problem, reported in HCS, October 1950, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 73-78.

10. See, for example, Lü Lieh-ch'ing 呂烈卿 and Ch'en Tung-yüan 陳東原 (trans.), "Pa-fu-lo-fu yü tsu-ch'an chieh-chi wei-hsin chu-i hsin-li-hsteh te tou-cheng" 巴甫洛夫與資產階級唯心主義心理學的鬥爭 (The Struggle Between Pavlov and Capitalist Idealist Psychology), KMJP, 3, 4, and 5, December, 1952.

gauged by the fact that between 1949 and 1956, over twelve thousand Russian books had been translated into Chinese, with 191 million volumes being printed.¹¹

Before traditional China could be re-evaluated and the role of such historical figures as Confucius commented on, more basic historical issues needed to be settled. This was reflected in the importance attached to the question of how to apply the Marxist concept of periodisation to Chinese history. Over two hundred articles were written on this topic in the fifties alone, in a debate that was to continue right up to the Cultural Revolution. The lack of knowledge of the new historical ideas and methods and the need for historians to first become familiar with Marxism meant that the little that was written on historical figures tended to rely on conventional interpretations. An article written by Feng Yu-lan in 1950 for the Soviet Encyclopaedia, for example, gave a straightforward, largely traditional account of Confucius.¹²

In the first few years of the People's Republic, there were no journals specifically devoted to academic discussions of philosophy or history. Articles on these subjects were published in journals of a general nature, like New Construction.

11. Figures from JMJP, 19 April, 1957, p. 5.

12. This was later reprinted as "Chung-kuo che-hsüeh ti fa-chan" 中國哲學底發展 (The Development of Chinese Philosophy), in Feng Yu-lan, Chung-kuo che-hsüeh-shih lun-wen ch'u-chi 中國哲學史論文初集 (Essays on the History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 1), Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1958, pp. 1-63.

In 1954 the Kuang-ming Daily began to devote regular columns to areas of academic interest, and the journal Historical Research appeared, with Philosophical Research coming out the following year. Avenues were now being opened for academics to present their ideas and debate issues within a Marxist framework. When Philosophical Research first appeared, its stated aim was "to struggle for the triumph of Marxist philosophy,"¹³ but the more immediate task seemed to have been to repudiate the ideas of Hu Shih, for the articles in that year were mainly devoted to attacks on pragmatism.¹⁴ Dewey's philosophy of pragmatism had probably been the most influential theory amongst the intellectuals who had not accepted Marxism, and Hu Shih had been Dewey's best known disciple and spokesman in China.¹⁵ Hu was criticised on many grounds, including the claim that he had adopted a disdainful stance towards Chinese culture. Historians of thought like Hou Wai-lu accused him of having "smeared and slandered the history of Chinese culture."¹⁶

13. See CHYC, 1955, No. 1, p. 1.

14. For criticisms directed against Hu Shih, see Hu Shih ssu-hsiang p'i-p'an 胡適思想批判 (A Critique of Hu Shih's Thought), 8 vols. Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1955.

15. See Jerome B. Grieder, Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution 1917-1937, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970.

16. Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬, "Ts'ung tui-tai che-hsüeh i-ch'an te kuan-tien fang-fa ho li-ch'ang p'i-p'an Hu Shih tsen-yang t'u-mo ho wu-mieh chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih" 從對待哲學遺產的觀點方法和立場批判胡適怎樣塗抹和誣蔑中國哲學史 (From the methods and standpoint of treating the philosophical legacy to criticising Hu Shih's smearing and slandering of the history of Chinese philosophy), CHYC, June 1955, No. 2, pp. 92-116.

There was evidently amongst the intellectuals some who feared that Chinese civilization would be totally destroyed, and who were anxious that in the new state some of the basic ingredients of Chinese tradition should be preserved. The emphasis on translation and publication of Soviet books at the expense of those written by Chinese writers must have added to their fears. By 1956, articles began to appear with such titles as "The Critical Assimilation of Our Country's Cultural Heritage is Necessary for Socialist Cultural Reconstruction."¹⁷ Those who wrote urging the inheritance of traditional concepts were usually careful to make sure that they quoted Mao in the justification of their ideas. Mao had written a number of times on this topic, stating that

we must on no account neglect the legacies of the ancients and the foreigners or refuse to learn from them, even though they are the works of feudal or bourgeois classes,

but at the same time warning that

uncritical transplantation or copying from the ancients and foreigners is the most sterile and harmful dogmatism.¹⁸

His statement in 1938 that "we should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy" was quoted by many writers to justify their concern with the past.¹⁹

17. Yang Yung-che 楊永志, "Wei-le chien-she she-hui chu-i wen-hua pi-shui p'i-p'an ti che-shuo chu-kuo wen-hua i-ch'an" 爲了建設社會主義文化必須批判地接受祖國文化遺產 (The Critical Assimilation of Our Country's Cultural Heritage is necessary for Socialist Cultural Reconstruction), CHYC, 1956, No. 1, pp. 52-70.

18. Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art", Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 3, Peking Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 81.

19. Mao Tse-tung, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War", Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 126.

There was as well the example of the Soviet Union which not only spoke of, but also practised the policy of inheriting the legacies of the past, where pre-revolution art and literature still had a place, and selected figures in Russian history were praised for their achievements.

The policy of "critical inheritance" allowed intellectuals a limited range on which to explore their ideas about the past, but for those who stepped beyond the boundaries there was criticism. Following the attack on Hu Shih for his pro-American orientation, Liang Sou-ming came under fire for having been too enthusiastic in his praise of Chinese tradition.²⁰ This double-edged attack on western liberalism and Chinese tradition was reflected in the title of an article written by Feng Yu-lan: "A Theory of Culture Supported by Two Kinds of Reactionary Thought: From A Criticism of Hu Shih to a Self-criticism."²¹

The relatively more relaxed atmosphere in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death in 1953 had a parallel in China.

20. The attacks on Liang Sou-ming developed into a mini-movement in the latter half of 1955. Articles critical of him are too numerous to list here. Examples are: Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈, "Chieh-ch'uan Liang Sou-ming te wen-hua kuan-tien te mai-pan hsing" 揭穿梁漱溟的文化觀點的買辦性 (Expose the Comprador Nature of Liang Sou-ming's Cultural Outlook), JMJP, 6 September, 1955, p. 3, and Sun Ting-kuo 孫定國, "P'i-p'an Liang Sou-ming te fan-tung te shih-chieh kuan" 批判梁漱溟的反動的史學觀 (Criticise Liang Sou-ming's Reactionary World Outlook), JMJP, 11 September, 1955, p. 3.

21. Feng Yu-lan, "Liang chung fan-tung ssu-hsiang chih-p'ei hsia te wen-hua lun: ts'ung p'i-p'an Hu Shih tou tzu-wo p'i-p'an" 兩種反動思想支配下的文化論——從批判胡適到自我批判 (A Cultural Theory Supported by Two Reactionary Thoughts: From A Criticism of Hu Shih to a Self-criticism), CHYC, June 1955, No. 2, pp. 28-45.

One result was that by 1955 more articles were being written by Chinese scholars. In 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow, an event that marked the beginning of the break between China and the Soviet Union.²² From then onwards, China began to turn more to the task of working out her own policies and directions, perhaps at first not conscious of any deliberate move away from the Soviet model.

In 1956 Mao gave a speech to a closed session of the state council, proposing the policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend." Although this speech was never published, some of his ideas were incorporated into a report by Lu Ting-i,²³ and the slogan became the motto for academic discussion in the latter half of 1956 and early 1957. A second speech by Mao in February 1957 "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," which proposed that non-antagonistic contradictions among the people should be solved by discussion rather than force, gave further encouragement to intellectuals to explore ideas.²⁴

22. See Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. 1, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

23. The official translation is reprinted in Communist China, 1955-9: Policy Documents with Analysis, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962, pp. 151-163.

24. Mao Tse-tung, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People", Four Essays on Philosophy, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968, pp. 79-133.

The slogan "a hundred schools of thought contend" was first coined in the Warring States Period, so that it was fitting that in the intellectual climate of the time there should be a revival of interest in studying ancient schools of thought. In fact, most of the books and articles written on Confucius during the fifties date from the Hundred Flowers period.²⁵

A conference at Peking University in January 1957 examined in detail the question of whether Chinese tradition could be inherited in a socialist era. Prominent historians like Feng Yu-lan and Chou Fu-ch'eng began to argue that some values could be class-transcending and thus could be inherited, even though they might have been derived from idealist schools of thought.²⁶ This kind of approach not only opened the way for more research on Confucius, but allowed as well the adoption of a more traditional approach. So far did the re-evaluation of Confucius go that in August 1957 Chu Ch'ien-chih claimed that Marxism was

25. Many of these works had in fact acknowledged that "today, under the policy 'Let a Hundred Schools Contend' proposed by the Party Central Committee, this book has an opportunity to be published." See Tang Ch'ing-fan 唐晴梵, Hsien-ch'in ssu-hsiang shih lun-lüeh 先秦思想史論略 (A Brief Study of the History of Pre-Ch'in Thought), reprinted in Hong Kong: Wen-ch'ang shu-chu, no date, p. 5.

26. Feng Yu-lan, "Chung-kuo che-hsüeh i-ch'an te chi-ch'eng wen-t'i" 中國哲學遺產的繼承問題 (The Problem of Inheriting China's Philosophical Legacy), in Che-Hsüeh yen-chiu p'ien-chi-pu 哲學研究編輯部 (ed.), Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih wen-t'i t'ou-lun chuan-chi 中國哲學史問題討論專輯 (Collected Discussions of Problems in the History of Chinese Philosophy), Peking: K'o-hsüeh ch'u-p'an-she, 1957, pp. 273-280. Chou Fu-ch'eng 周輔成, "Pi-sui chung-shih chu-kuo che-hsüeh i-ch'an te t'e-tien ho chia-chih" 必須重視祖國哲學遺產的特點和價值 (We Must Pay Particular Attention to the Special Character and Value of Our Country's Philosophical Legacy), in ibid., pp. 286-294.

derived from Sung Confucianism, arguing that the introduction of Chinese thought into Europe in the seventeenth century had influenced the development of materialist philosophy in France and dialectics in Germany, two important sources of Marxist thought.²⁷

There was a similar liberalisation in Soviet philosophical circles at the time as part of the general thaw in Communist countries. Zdanov's argument that the history of philosophy should be seen as the history of struggle between idealism and materialism was now debated in the Soviet Union. Chinese philosophers also began to dispute Zdanov's views. Jen Chi-yü in early 1957 admitted that for several years, Zdanov's speech had been taken as the guide in studying the history of Chinese philosophy. He now criticised himself for having "emphasized only the struggle between materialism and idealism and neglected their inter-action and mutual penetration which has enriched materialism."²⁸ Zdanov's analysis, Jen argued, was incomplete, and the idea that idealistic philosophy had merely served the exploiting classes too simplistic. Despite this criticism, there were several writers, including Ai Ssu-ch'i and Sun Ting-kuo, who still preferred this kind of analysis.

27. Chu Ch'ien-chih 朱謙之, "Shih-pa shih-chi chung-kuo che-hsieh tui ou-chou che-hsieh te ying-hsiang" 十八世紀中國哲學對歐洲哲學的影響 (The Influence of Chinese Philosophy on European Philosophy in the Eighteenth Century), CHYC, 1957, No. 4, pp. 48-57.

28. Quoted in China News Analysis, March 1958, No. 219, p. 2.

A second conference on Chinese history held in May 1957 saw further criticism of the then prevailing views. It continued to discuss the relevance of the classification of philosophers as idealist or materialist to an understanding of Chinese philosophy. Hou Wai-lu was one of those who felt that this had produced problems, when in the early fifties there had been a tendency to place as many philosophers as possible in the category of materialists,

as if it would be a glory to us that many of our forefathers were materialist. Consequently many of the idealists were presented as materialists. If this goes on, all our philosophers from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen will be materialist, but that is not the way to do scientific research.²⁹

The renewed interest in traditional Chinese thought was only one facet of the intellectual activity of this time. Besides encompassing widespread academic debate, the movement also developed into criticisms of the party, of the policy of learning from the Soviet Union, and even of communism itself.³⁰ When this was coupled with the beginnings of student unrest, those communist leaders who had originally had doubts about the new policy must have felt that their fears had been justified. By June 1957, these criticisms were brought to an end with the launching of a counter-attack by the party.

29. Quoted in China News Analysis, 1958, No. 219, p. 3.

30. See the extracts reprinted in Roderick MacFarquhar, The Hundred Flowers, London: Stevens & Sons Limited, 1960.

The anti-rightist movement which resulted included in its scope of attack many of those who had begun to make more positive appraisals of Confucius. In 1958 New Construction published articles repudiating Feng Yu-lan's views and criticising a biography of Confucius by Li Chang-chih.³¹ In the universities, a number of teachers were labelled as rightists and either removed from teaching positions or placed under supervision.

The anti-rightist movement was followed by the Great Leap Forward of 1958, when scholarly research gave way to the movement to promote mass culture. The idea of relying on the masses in scientific research was promoted, and thousands of poems published as expressions of mass creativity. Schools and universities came under fire for having placed too much emphasis on ancient and classical learning. It is not surprising that in this climate, with the emphasis on the present, interest in history and classical philosophy declined, not to be revived again until the early sixties.

31. Ch'i Liang-chi 齊良驥, "Kuan-yü che-hsüeh i-ch'an chi-ch'eng te wen-t'i: p'i-p'an Feng Yu-lan hsien-sheng te 'ch'ou-hsiang chi-ch'eng-fa'" 關於哲學遺產繼承的問題——批判馮友蘭先生的「抽象繼承法」 (On the Problem of Inheriting the Philosophical Legacy: Criticising Mr. Feng Yu-lan's 'Method of Abstract Inheritance'), HCS, 1958, No. 9, pp. 22-25. Liu Ch'uan-te 劉全德 and Li Ming 李明, "I-pan hsuan-yang feng-chien lun-li tao-te te fang-tung chu-chuo: p'i-p'an yu-p'ai fen-tzu Li Ch'ang-chih te 'K'ung-tzu te ku-shih'" 一本宣揚封建倫理道德的反動著作——批判右派分子李長之的《孔子的故事》 (A Reactionary Work Which Propagates Feudal Ethics and Morality: Criticising the Rightist Li Ch'ang-chih's 'The Story of Confucius'), HCS, 1958, No. 11, pp. 61-65.

Confucius and Class

The Communist Manifesto proclaimed that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."³² Although some of the more traditional historians in the early fifties may not have agreed with this formula, they at least paid lip service to it, while those Marxist historians who had already adopted class analysis as a method placed even more stress on it. New editions of pre-1949 works dealing with the whole span of Chinese history now carried prefaces stressing the importance of the question of class struggle, and in some cases were rewritten using class terminology.³³

This change of emphasis affected studies on Confucius. Most writers now made a point of mentioning Confucius' class membership, although this was generally limited to claiming that Confucius had belonged to the upper stratum of the feudal classes, relying on traditional accounts based on that of Ssu-ma Ch'ien.³⁴ Some scholars, though, were beginning to critically

32. "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, p. 108.

33. Chou Ku-ch'eng 周谷城, for example, had in his General History of China, changed the title of chapter one from the 1939 edition's "The Era from Nomadic Tribes to Settlements" to "Ancient China: From Man's Struggle with Nature to Sharpened Class Contradictions" in the 1955 edition. See Chou Ku-ch'eng, Chung-kuo T'ung-shih 中國通史 (General History of China), Vol. 1, reprinted in Hong Kong: Wen-luo ch'u-p'an-she, no date, p. 35, and Chung-kuo t'ung-shih, Vol. 1, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1957, p. 21.

34. Szuma Chien, (trans. by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang), "Confucius", Records of the Historian, Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1974, pp. 1-27.

analyse the question of Confucius' class membership and class stand.³⁵

The problem of determining the class membership of a historical figure, and of evaluating his historical significance according to Marxist criteria involves a number of other questions, which should really be answered first. It needs to be based on an understanding of the mode of production of the time, and hence of periodisation. Advocacy of a particular social form might be progressive at the beginning of an era, but reactionary at the end. If, for example, it was argued that Confucius had stood for the interests of the landlord class, he would be judged as progressive if he had been living in the slave period, but not if he had lived during the feudal era. Knowledge of the mode of production can also rule out certain possibilities. If, for example, Confucius was born during the feudal period, he could not be a member of a slave owning class.

Periodisation still leaves open the question of which of the particular class existing in that period, a historical figure belonged to. It merely narrows down the possibilities. A distinction can also be made between class membership, namely the class a person belongs to, and class stand, that is the class whose interests he supports. The two will of course on the whole coincide, but exceptions are possible, particularly

35. This has in fact been done by such leftist writers as Kuo Mo-jo and Chao Chi-pin before 1949.

at points of transition between one period and another, as Marx himself made clear in the Communist Manifesto when he stated that

in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour ... a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class.³⁶

Both class stand and class membership are relevant to an overall evaluation of a historical figure.

While the question of periodisation has very important implications for an assessment of Confucius' class membership and class stand, this was generally not acknowledged in the early fifties in discussions on Confucius although the question of periodisation was itself the major focus of historical controversy. These debates on periodisation, however, were to provide a basis for later evaluations of Confucius.

While Marx and Engels had classified history into stages progressing through primitive communism, slave, feudal and capitalist periods to the socialist period, Marx's undefined reference to "an Asiatic mode of production"³⁷ left open the question of whether Asian history followed the same pattern as that of Europe. Historians writing in the Soviet Union while Stalin was in power had concluded that this concept did not

36. "Manifesto of the Communist Party", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, p. 117.

37. Karl Marx, "Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, p. 504.

suggest a different path of development for Asian countries.³⁸ For historians writing in China in the fifties who were so heavily influenced by the Soviet Union, deciding on the dividing lines for these periods of history was a necessary step to a Marxist understanding of China's past. The issue became a major concern for historians with over two hundred articles devoted to the subject in the fifties.³⁹ It was by no means a new issue though, leftwing intellectuals had already been discussing it for over twenty years.⁴⁰

Kuo Mo-jo had already drawn up two classifications before 1949. In 1931, he had considered the Chou Dynasty to be part of the feudal period, but in 1945 he changed this to include the Ch'in as well as the Chou dynasties in the slave era. In 1950 he again turned his attention to this question proposing a new periodisation.⁴¹ Of all the periodisation schemes formulated in the fifties, this was the most important. It was later also accepted as a basic for attacking Confucius in the seventies.

38. See Maurice Meisner, "Li Ta-chao and the Chinese Communist Treatment of the Materialist Conception of History", Albert Feuerwerker, (ed.), History in Communist China, Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1968, pp. 296-297.

39. Cheng Kuang-ming 鄭廣銘, et al., "Shih-nien lai te chung-kuo shih yen-chiu kai-shu" 十年來的中國史研究概述 (A Brief Outline of Chinese Historical Studies over the Past Ten Years), KMJF, 29 October 1959, p. 6.

40. Arif Dirlik, "Mirror to Revolution: Early Marxist Images of Chinese History", Journal of Asian Studies, February 1976, Vol. 33, No. 2, pp. 193-221.

41. Kuo Mo-jo 郭沫若, "Chung-kuo nu-li she-hui" 中國奴隸社會 (Slave Society in China), HCS, 1950, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 33.

Kuo was prompted to revise his earlier scheme after reading a report by the anthropologist Kuo Pao-chün on the archaeological finds in Shang tombs at Anyang, in which over two thousand people had been buried alive as sacrifices for the dead. Kuo Pao-chün had written:

After the Shang dynasty, this custom began to decline. In a Western Chou tomb at Hsinchuan a charioteer was found buried alive next to his chariot with his hands tied behind his back and his body bent forwards. In another tomb, one person was buried alive with his limbs bent, together with a dog. In another pit, there were seventy-two skeletons of horses, twelve carriages, but no human beings. In one Warring States tomb at Chihhsien, four people were buried. They were placed at the four sides of the coffin and their heads were intact, which showed they were buried alive. After excavating two Chou tombs, only six such bodies had been found. Compared with the Shang Dynasty, the difference is quite considerable.⁴²

Although Kuo Pao-chün had pointed out that there was a decline in the burial of slaves by the Chou period, the fact that human sacrifices had been discovered in the Chou tombs was one of the dividing line between the slave and feudal periods again. His new dividing line this time was that "both the Shang and the Chou were slave societies, and the end of the slave society

42. Kuo Pao-chün 郭寶鈞, "Chi yin-chou hsün-jen chih shih-shih" 記殷周殉人之史實 (Recalling Historical Facts about Human Sacrifices in the Yin and Chou Dynasties), in (ed.), Li-shih yen-chiu p'ien-chi-pu, Chung-kuo te nu-li-chih yü feng-chien-chih fen-chi wen-t'i lun-wen hsiian-chi 中國的奴隸制與封建制分期問題 論文選集 (Selected Writings on the Problem of the Periodisation of Chinese feudal and Slave Systems), Peking: San-lien shu-chu, 1956, p. 60.

should be between the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods."⁴³ Kuo Mo-jo argued that there was not enough evidence to state that there was slave burials declined in number during the Chou Dynasty, since as the tombs discovered for the Shang Dynasty were those of emperors, they could not be directly compared to the tombs unearthed from Chou, which were of lesser personages.

Kuo Mo-jo's article was significant because in using the evidence of sacrificial victims buried alive as the determining factor in defining a slave society, he provided a historical yardstick for Engels' anthropological concept. This was in fact later used by Kuo in his final statement on ancient Chinese periodisation. Kuo had taken his definition of a slave system from Stalin:

Under a slave system, the basic relations in production are such that the slave owners own the means of production and the producers. These producers are the slaves whom the slave-owners could buy, sell and slaughter like domestic animals.⁴⁴

Another influential scheme of periodisation in the fifties was proposed by Fan Wen-lan, who believed that the feudal period began with the Western Chou.⁴⁵ One of Fan's arguments rested

43. Kuo Mo-jo, "Tu-le 'Chi yin-chou hs'ün-jen chih shih-shih"
讀了記殷周殉人之史實 (After Reading 'Recalling Historical
Facts about Human Sacrifices in the Yin and Chou Dynasties'),
in *ibid.*, p. 55.

44. Kuo Mo-jo, Nu-li chih shih-tai 奴隸制時代 (Period of
the Slave System), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1973, p. 16.

45. Fan Wen-lan 范文瀾, "Ch'u-chi feng-chien she-hui k'ai-
chih yü hsi-chou" 初期封建社會開始於西周 (The Early Feudal
Society Began in the Western Chou), Li-shih yen-chiu p'ien-chi-
pu, (ed.), *loc. cit.*, pp. 359-473.

on the quotation from Mencius that "Chung-ni said, 'Was he not without posterity who first made wooden images to bury with the dead?'"⁴⁶ Fan interpreted this to mean that Confucius' opposition to the use of images as burial objects, coupled with his advocacy of adherence to the Chou rites, was sufficient to show that by the Chou Dynasty the custom of human sacrifice must have disappeared.

Kuo Mo-jo, answering Fan Wen-lan's argument, gave a different interpretation of the reason why Confucius had been opposed to the use of burial objects. He believed that before the slave period, first straw and then wooden objects had been used in funeral rites, and that it was only with the beginning of the slave period that human beings were used. That, according to Kuo, was the reason that Confucius cursed the first person to use images as burial objects.⁴⁷

This enabled Kuo to still give a favourable interpretation to Confucius, while disagreeing with Fan Wen-lan on his general periodisation scheme. What is interesting is that both accounts assume that the traditional interpretation that Confucius had been opposed to human burial was correct. Thus, the drawing up of periodisation schemes were made to fit in with traditional interpretations of historical figures, rather

46. Translation from Legge, p. 442.

47. Kuo Mo-jo, "Kuan-yü chou-tai she-hui te shang-t'ao" 關於周代社會的商討 (A Discussion of Society in the Chou Period), Chung-kuo te nu-li-chih yü feng-chien-chih fen-ch'i wen-t'i lun-wen hsiian-chi, p. 88.

than being used as the basis to develop new theories.

It would have been equally possible to argue that human sacrifice was the original practice which had declined as the utility of slaves as producers was recognised, and that Confucius may have cursed the first person to use wooden images for abandoning a traditional practice. A case could be made out for this kind of argument since Confucius in cursing the first person to use images believed that person should have no descendents. In Confucian logic, this could mean that since the person had been so unfilial as to abandon the custom of human sacrifice and resorted to images when sacrificing to his parents or ancestors, then he should have no descendents, that is, that no one should be filial to him. This is just one of a number of alternative arguments which might have been put forward.

In fact, most writers in the fifties proceeded to give interpretations in line with the traditional view of Confucius as an upholder of the feudal system, rather than basing their arguments on the Marxist criteria of periodisation. Yang Hsiang-kuei pointed out this anomaly in 1953. He referred to the Essentials of Chinese History edited by the Chinese Historical Studies Association, which while it acknowledged that the question of the nature of society in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period had not yet been settled, was still definite in stating that Confucius had upheld the feudal society. Yang reasoned that

if Confucius had not been living in a feudal society, then Confucius could not have been an upholder of the feudal system. One can see that the editors of Essentials of Chinese History have basically accepted that the Spring and Autumn period was a feudal society.⁴⁸

Apart from the periodisations proposed by Kuo Mo-jo and Fan Wen-lan, there were many other schemes with some historians following the Russian sinologues' proposal that slave society lasted as late as the Han Dynasty.⁴⁹ These other scheme, however, were of only minor significance, and they had little influence on evaluations of Confucius.

Since a periodisation scheme had not become generally accepted, assessments made in the fifties of Confucius' class membership embodied a range of opinions. He was variously seen as a member of the slave-owning ruling class, the feudal ruling class, as a revolutionary, a reformer, or as one who had risen from the ranks of the poor. Even when a periodisation scheme was agreed on by writers, a variety of opinions emerged.

Yang Jung-kuo and Chao Chi-pin were foremost amongst those who argued that Confucius had been a member of the slave owning class who had tried to prevent slave society from falling into

48. Yang Hsiang-k'uei 楊向奎, "Kuan-yü hsi-chou te she-hui hsing-chih wen-t'i" 關於西周的社會性質問題 (On the Problem of the Nature of Western Chou Society), in ibid., pp. 332-333.

49. For example, Chou Ku-ch'eng, "Chung-kuo nu-li she-hui lun" 中國奴隸社會論 (On Chinese Slave Society), in ibid., pp. 61-67. T'ung Shu-yeh 童書業, "Chung-kuo ku-shih fen-ch'i wen-t'i te t'ao-lun" 中國古史分期問題的討論 (A Discussion of the Problem of Periodisation of Ancient Chinese History), in ibid., pp. 130-161.

a decline, a view that they had both expressed in the forties.⁵⁰ Yang Jung-kuo based his thesis on historical accounts. He quoted examples of Confucius' attempts to destroy the three big families Chisun, Mengsun, and Shusun because these families represented threats to the stability of slave aristocratic rule and Confucius' execution of Shao-cheng Mao for essentially the same reasons.⁵¹ Chao Chi-pin's analysis is more textual. He analysed the meanings of the terms used in the Analects and came to the conclusion that when Confucius said "love jen" (usually translated as love men), he actually meant "love the class of slave owners." That is, in the time of Confucius, jen had signified the slave owners while min referred to the class of slaves.⁵² Yet Kuo Mo-jo, who also believed Confucius lived in a slave society gave a very different assessment. He considered that Confucius had been a revolutionary who had supported attempts to overthrow the slave system. Kuo cited examples of Confucius' willingness to assist the

50. Yang Jung-kuo 楊榮國, K'ung Mo te ssu-hsiang 孔墨的恩想 (The Thinking of Confucius and Motzu), Shanghai: Sheng-huo shu-tien, 1947. Chao Chi-pin 趙紀彬, Ku-tai ju-chia che-hsüeh p'i-p'an 古代儒家哲學批判 (Criticisms of Ancient Confucian Philosophy), Shanghai: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1948.

51. Yang Jung-kuo, Chung-kuo ku-tai ssu-hsiang shih 中國古代恩想史 (History of Ancient Chinese Thought), 2nd edn., Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1973, pp. 81-106.

52. Chao Chi-pin, "Shih jen min" 釋人氏 (On jen and min), Lun-yü hsin t'ien 論語新探 (A New Investigation of the Analects), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1962, pp. 7-28.

rebels of his time.⁵³

By far the majority of those writing in the fifties, however, agreed with the traditional view that Confucius had come from a ruling aristocracy which had declined in the feudal period. The interpretation of the category of ruling class though was very indefinite, as a description of the social classes of the period had not yet been agreed on. For this reason Confucius was variously described as a member of the ta-fu, chün-tzu, ling-chu, nu-li-chu or ti-chu class.⁵⁴

It might be expected with the near-unanimity of opinion that Confucius had belonged to the upper classes, that using a Marxist analysis, he would be considered to have stood for the interests of that class. Yet it was much more often argued that he had stood for the interests of the people.

Lü Cheng-yü, in his political history republished in 1955, argued that Confucius had stood on the side of the feudal chün-tzu class, although he also tried to prove that Confucius had attempted to reach a compromise position between the aristocracy and the people. He considered that Confucius had tried to use the shih class to attack the ta-fu class

53. Kuo Mo-jo, "K'ung Mo te p'i-p'an" 孔墨的批判 (A Criticism of Confucius and Mo-tzu), Shih p'i-p'an shu 十批判書 (Ten Critiques), Peking: K'o-hsüeh ch'u-p'an-she, 1956, pp. 71-122.

54. The written form are as follows: 大夫, 君子, 領主, 奴隸主, 地主.

by the use of such means as the rectification of names.⁵⁵

Chi Wen-fu, in one of the earliest articles written on Confucius in the fifties, stated that Confucius had been a "thinker who represented the feudal aristocracy."⁵⁶ However, he practically contradicted this by going on to show that by the use of "jen" and the setting up of a private system of education, Confucius had actually worked for the welfare of the common people. In 1954, Feng Yu-lan et al. also tried to argue that while Confucius was a member of the aristocracy, he had tried to bring about social reforms which would serve the interests of the people, by instilling new meaning into the old Chou rites, concluding that Confucius in fact represented the newly arising landlord class.⁵⁷

A different interpretation was given by Li Chang-chih, who claimed that since Confucius' family had been very poor when he was young, he could really be regarded as having come

55. Li Chen-yü 呂振羽, Chung-kuo cheng-chih ssu-hsiang shih 中國政治思想史 (History of Chinese Political Thought), Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1955.

56. Chi Wen-fu 嵇文甫, "Kuan-yü K'ung-tzu te li-shih p'ing-chia wen-t'i 關於孔子的歷史評價問題" (On the Problem of Appraising Confucius' Position in History), Li-shih chiao-hsüeh 歷史教學, 1953, No. 8, pp. 2-4.

57. Feng Yu-lan et al., "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang yen-chiu 孔子思想研究" (A Study of Confucius' Thinking), HCS, 1954, No. 4, pp. 35-42.

from the poorer classes of society.⁵⁸ Li was one of a number of academics writing on Confucius who came under attack during the anti-rightist movement of 1958.⁵⁹

Confucius and Ethics

While Confucian philosophy on the whole laid most stress on ethical questions and moral aspects of life, Marxism, like many other schools of western philosophy, paid more attention to questions of epistemology and metaphysics. In the early fifties, a number of books and articles by such prominent theorists as Ai Ssu-ch'i were published setting out Marxist guidelines to philosophical research.⁶⁰

58. Li Ch'ang-chih, K'ung-tzu 孔子 (Confucius), Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1956.

59. Liu Ch'uan-te 劉全德 and Li Ming 李明, "I-pan hsüan-yang feng-chien lun-li tao-te fan-tung chu-chuo: p'i-p'an yü-p'ai fen-tzu Li Ch'ang-chih te 'K'ung-tzu te ku-shih'" 一本宣揚封建倫理道德的反動著作——批判右派分子李長文的《孔子的故事》(A Reactionary Work Which Propagates Feudal Ethics and Morality: Criticising the Rightist Li Ch'ang-chih's 'The Story of Confucius'), HCS, 1958, No. 11, pp. 61-65.

60. Ai Ssu-ch'i 艾思奇 wrote an article on the study of Marxism-Leninism in the first issue of the influential journal Hsüeh-hsi 學習 (Study). Ai Ssu-ch'i, "Ts'ung t'ou hsüeh-ch'i: hsüeh-hsi ma-lieh chu-i te ch'u-pu fang-fa" 從頭學起——學習馬列主義的初步方法 (Learn from the Beginning: First Steps in the Study of Marxism-Leninism), Hsüeh-hsi, 1949, No. 1, pp. 4-5. One example of a book on the mastery of Marxism-Leninism is Ma-en-lieh-ssu ssu-hsiang fang-fa lun 馬恩列斯思想方法論 (A Discussion of the Methods of Marx-Engel-Lenin-Stalin Thought), Shanghai: Chieh-fang-she, 1950.

Zdanov's depiction of the history of philosophy as a struggle between idealism and materialism was taken as the orthodox Marxist guide at this time. This division of philosophy into materialism and idealism affected the overall evaluations made of a philosopher, since idealist philosophers were regarded as having been on the side of the exploiting classes.⁶¹ For those writers who were pro-Confucius, it was thus natural to look for signs that Confucius had been a materialist.

Confucius had discussed more concrete questions connected with cosmology, the course of nature and the nature of ghosts rather than metaphysics as such, but what he had said on these subjects was used in the limited discussions that did take place of whether his philosophy was idealist or materialist. Fan Wen-lan, for example, had used Confucius' statements that "while you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits"; "while you do not know life, how can you know about death"; and "respect the spirits but keep them at a distance" to support his view that there were elements of materialist philosophy in the Confucian conception of the world.⁶²

Generally, the Spring and Autumn period was taken as the genesis of materialist ideas in China. Confucius was

61. HCS, October 1950, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 73-78.

62. Fan Wen-lan, Chung-kuo t'ung-shih chien-p'ien, Vol. 1, p. 203. Translations of the quotes from Confucius are from Legge, p. 73 and p. 142.

usually considered to have both materialist and idealist elements in his teachings, with Mencius elaborating on the idealist strain and Hsün-tzu on his materialist strain.⁶³

On the whole, though, little attention was given to the question of whether Confucius had been idealist or materialist, although this issue was extensively discussed in connection with other philosophers.

Despite the introduction of Marxist analysis to the history of philosophy, discussions of Confucius' philosophical outlook still tended to concentrate in the traditional way on his ethical concepts. Discussion of Confucius' ethical principles in the fifties can be divided into two periods: the early fifties and the Hundred Flowers period. In the early fifties, less was written, and that which appeared did not place quite as much emphasis on the value of inheriting from Confucius as the later writings of the Hundred Flowers period.

Yang Jung-kuo's book, rewritten in 1952, was one of the most important works in the fifties that offered a negative

63. See Hou Wai-lu, et al., Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih 中國思想通史 (General History of Chinese Thought), Vol. 1, Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1957. Pei-ching ta-hsieh che-hsieh-hsi chung-kuo che-hsieh-shih chia-shi, (ed.) Chung-kuo che-hsieh shih Chiang-shou t'i-kang ch'u kao 中國哲學史講授提綱初稿 (Lecture Notes for a History of Chinese Philosophy: First Manuscript), reprinted in Hong Kong: no publisher given, 1975.

evaluation of Confucius.⁶⁴ Yang, who believed that Confucius had belonged to the period when the slave system was disintegrating, argued that Confucius had used the concept of jen to keep the slaves in check. Yang believed Confucius had used such ethical concepts to ensure that power should remain in the hands of the monarch rather than being given to the newly arisen class of feudal lords. Jen had thus only referred to the relationships between the aristocracy. In answer to the argument that Confucius had discovered man in his conception of jen, Yang argued that "the man discovered by him was only the declining aristocracy!"⁶⁵ To Yang, Confucius had advocated jen because it included all the old moral concepts of the slave era such as filial piety, loyalty, the rites and so on.⁶⁶ In advocating jen, therefore, Confucius had in fact attempted to restore a crumbling social structure.

These opinions of Yang Jung-kuo were later to dominate much of the discussions in the seventies but in the fifties very few writers agreed with him. Even Chao Chi-pin, another

64. Yang Jung-kuo, Chung-kuo ku-tai ssu-hsiang shih.

65. This was argued early in 1946 by Yang, K'ung Mo te ssu-hsiang, p. 157; and it was reiterated in the fifties and sixties, Chung-kuo ku-tai ssu-hsiang shih, p. 90.

66. Ibid., pp. 89-102.

of the very few writers then critical of Confucius, argued quite differently in his dissertation on li and jen. He argued that li was the primary concept, and jen was subordinate to it.⁶⁷ Interestingly, although his arguments clearly suggested that Confucius had played a reactionary role for the time he was living in, Chao in the fifties still stated that Confucius had been progressive.⁶⁸

Ts'ai Shang-ssu was not so complimentary. His book, published in 1950, attacked Confucian ethics in a similar vein to that of the May Fourth radicals, concentrating on the social practices that he considered had resulted from Confucianism. He argued that Confucius was an enemy of the workers and peasants, women, socialist countries, democracy and creativity.⁶⁹ Ts'ai does not seem to have contributed much to later discussions on Confucius, and this kind of analysis seems to have been ignored by other writers since, suggesting that the May Fourth approach, even when punctuated by anti-Kuomintang references, was no longer applicable.

Books and articles published in the early fifties were much more commonly pro-Confucius in orientation. The number

67. Chao Chi-pin, Lun yü hsin-t'an, 1962 edn., p. 4.

68. Ibid.

69. Ts'ai Shang-ssu 蔡尚思, Chung-kuo ch'uan-t'ung ssu-hsiang tsung p'i-p'an 中国传统思想总批判 (A Total Criticism of Traditional Chinese Thought), Shanghai: T'ang-tai ch'u-pan-she, 1950.

of works arguing in favour of Confucius was increased by the republication of earlier books, which, while they utilised a new Marxist terminology, seldom offered a basically different interpretation. Those who argued in favour of Confucius usually based their evaluation on an interpretation of Confucius' ethical concepts. Their argument often rested on the idea that Confucius had discovered man in jen, which had enabled him to inject a new humanity into the old rites.

Of those who held this view, Kuo Mo-jo offered the most interesting exposition. His interpretation of Confucius as a revolutionary enabled him to render jen to encompass such concepts as serving the people even to the point of self-sacrifice. He believed Confucius had in the use of jen discovered humanity in the common people of this period the slaves, and that this recognition of their human qualities was behind the movement to liberate the slaves.⁷⁰

Similar positive evaluations of Confucius' concept of jen were also given by Tu Kuo-hsiang and Feng Yu-lan, who both believed that by jen Confucius had meant benevolence towards the common man. This was despite the fact that they disagreed on the question of periodisation, and hence on the question of the social composition of society at that time. Tu subscribed to Kuo Mo-jo's view that the Spring and Autumn period was

70. Kuo Mo-jo, Shih p'i-p'an shu.

when the slave system was already on the decline whereas Feng Yu-lan believed that Confucius had lived in the feudal era.⁷¹ All these writers, then, despite differences in their views on periodisation, agreed that Confucius had been on the side of social change.

Their views were representative of historians writing on Confucius in the fifties. They argued that when Confucius was young he was poor and so had had close contacts with the lower classes. He had therefore sympathised with them. However, he came originally from an aristocratic family and was fond of the old Chou rites, which were unjust to the lower classes. In order to solve this contradiction, he had added jen, which meant to love men to these rites. This addition made the rites more humane.

Feng Yu-lan had also claimed that Confucius had used jen in an attempt to lessen the class contradictions of his time. Since Confucius had wanted to return to the old rites, but had been on the side of the newly emerging landlord class which then opposed the old feudal lords, his position had been in practice one of compromise.⁷²

71. Tu Kuo-hsiang 杜國序, Hsien-ch'in chu-tzu ssu-hsiang kai-yao 先秦諸子思想概要 (The Essentials of the Thoughts of the Various Pre-Ch'in Philosophers), 2nd edn., Peking: San-lien shu-tien, 1955, and Feng Yu-lan et al., "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang yen-chiu", 1954. By the time Feng helped write the Peking University lecture notes in 1957, however, he had himself accepted Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation scheme.

72. Feng Yu-lan, ibid.

Chi Wen-fu was a fourth writer to argue this viewpoint in the early fifties. His article is interesting in that he contended because of the concept of jen, Confucian ideas could still be inherited. While this observation was implicit in a number of other articles, Chi seems to have been the first to explicitly state it. He wrote that the good in Confucius should be inherited in the same way that "Marx was able to separate and absorb the rational central core from the mysterious outer coating of Hegel,"⁷³ basing this primarily on his assertion that Confucius had elevated the position of the lower classes through the use of jen. By the discovery of human nature in all men, Confucius had been able to break through the confines of the aristocracy and had therefore been democratic.

During the Hundred Flowers period, there was an upsurge of interest in Confucius. In January 1957, a conference held at Peking University discussed the question of how to treat Chinese philosophy. It is quite clear from the articles published after the conference that a significant number of Chinese intellectuals continued to cherish the Chinese philosophical legacy and Confucius,⁷⁴ suggesting that despite numerous thought reform movements, many intellectuals had not changed their opinions very much. There was an almost unanimous

73. Chi Wen-fu, "Kuan-yü K'ung-tzu te li-shih p'ing-chia wen-t'i", p. 4.

74. See the articles in Che-hsüeh yen-chiu p'ien-chi-pu, (ed.), Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih wen-t'i t'ao-lun chuan-chi.

opinion that the Chinese philosophical legacy could still have relevance for China at this time.

Feng Yu-lan, whose views on this question were the most influential, claimed that philosophical concepts had two facets - the concrete and the abstract. These could be separated, and the abstract aspect of a concept inherited while the concrete aspect was discarded. He illustrated this with reference to the Confucian concept of jen. Recognising that some people had stated that in talking of "love men" Confucius had meant the aristocratic classes, Feng claimed that this concrete aspect of jen, belonging to a different age, was no longer of use, but that the abstract notion of "love men" could and should be inherited.⁷⁵

This proposal, coming at this time, could be explained in part as the beginning of an attempt to move away from the excessive Russian influence, and to bring back some elements from Chinese tradition. The "hundred schools contend" part of Mao's famous slogan had referred to the period that Confucius had lived in, implying that the spirit of debate of Confucius time should be inherited, this must have seemed to give approval to inherit values from this period.

75. Feng Yu-lan, "Chung-kuo che-hsüeh i-ch'an ti chi-ch'eng wen-t'i" 中國哲學遺產底繼承問題 (On the Problem of Inheriting the Chinese Philosophical Legacy), in Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih lun-wen ch'u-chi, pp. 100-101.

Articles and books began to appear lauding Confucius in stronger terms. Chi Wen-fu referred to him as "the cock whose crow caused the sky to be brightened." He also reiterated the praises he had heaped onto Confucius in 1953, stressing that jen was a humane doctrine and calling Confucius the "feudal sage."⁷⁶

This kind of praise was typical of this period. Li Ch'ang-chih, in the first book specifically devoted to the life of Confucius published after 1949, described him as one who had consistently worked towards the well-being of all. He also argued that jen meant "love men", and that Confucius in advocating this at a time when the slave system was collapsing and the common people rising had been progressive. While praise of Confucius filled most of the book, Li did make some criticisms of the concept of li. He claimed that li was a code of hierarchical behaviour which had placed limitations on jen. This, Li Ch'ang-chih wrote, showed that Confucius had not broken entirely with old ways of behaviour.⁷⁷

One of the strongest arguments for inheriting Confucian values was put forward by Tou Chung-kuang. He contended that the Confucian spirit of the great commonwealth, the five human

76. Chi Wen-fu 然文甫, Ch'un-ch'iu chan-kuo ssu-hsiang shih-hua 春秋戰國思想史話 (Comments on the History of Thought in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period), Peking: Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan-she, 1958, p. 22.

77. Li Ch'ang-chih, K'ung-tzu.

relationships, and personal cultivation could be inherited and used in a Communist society.⁷⁸ These were the kind of values which had previously been criticised by the May Fourth writers.

Besides indicating the importance of Confucius for Chinese philosophy, Chu Ch'ien-chih went even further to argue that Confucian values had influenced the great nineteenth century thinkers in Europe. For evidence, he referred to the fact that these thinkers had spoken positively of Confucius, reasoning that their writers on love and democracy had been a reflection of the kind of teaching advocated by Confucius. No stronger claim could have been made for the value of Confucian teachings than to suggest that Marx had been indirectly influenced by Confucianism and that Marxism was therefore a descendent of Confucianism. Chu invited others to debate with him on this issue, but the argument seems to have been too tenuous to have invoked any response.

Confucius and Education

Writings which referred to Confucius in the early fifties usually included at least a paragraph or two on Confucius'

78. Tou Ch'ung-kuang 竇重光, "Ts'ung ju-chia te lun-li hshieh-shuo-chung k'ang tao-te te chi-ch'eng wen-t'i" 從儒家倫理學說中看道德的繼承問題 (The Problem of Inheriting Ethics Viewed From the Moral Doctrines of Confucianism), KMJP, 10 April, 1957.

contribution to education, interpreting it in a favourable light.⁷⁹ Apart from scattered references such as these, no articles specifically dealing with Confucius' contribution to education seem to have appeared until 1954.⁸⁰

This lack of interest in traditional education in the early years can be explained by the great emphasis placed on creating a new educational system, which would both lead to building a new, socialist man and, through the training of scientists, engineers and technicians to aid the economic reconstruction of the country. In education, as in other fields, the policy was to "lean to one side" in learning from the Soviet Union.⁸¹

Since the beginning of the century, traditional education had been undermined by the continuous process of the encroachment of western ideas, so that it was western rather than traditional ideas on education which were seen as the real barrier to constructing a new communist system. Western liberal theories on education now came under an intensive attack, which focussed

79. See for example Fan Wen-lan 范文瀾, Chung-kuo t'ung-shih chien-p'ien 中國通史簡編 (A Concise General History of China), Vol. 1, Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 4th edn., 1964, p. 209. Hou Wai-lu 侯外廬 et al., Chung-kuo ssu-hsiang t'ung-shih 中國思想通史 (A General History of Chinese Thought), Vol. 1, Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, pp. 137-144.

80. A search of sources available in Hong Kong has not revealed any articles. Chan Wing-tsit, Chinese Philosophy 1949-1963: An Annotated Bibliography of Mainland China Publications, pp. 107-110, also does not list any articles on Confucius and education before 1954.

81. This expression was coined by Mao, see Mao Tse-tung, "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 4, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1969, p. 415.

particularly on the theories of John Dewey.⁸² It must have appeared that traditional concepts, which had already declined so much in importance by 1949, would simply wither away, and that no particular drive against them would be necessary.

Many aspects of the traditional system of education, like the importance attached to the role of the teachers, were also features of Soviet education at the time. After a radical beginning, by the thirties, Soviet education had begun to absorb features of the traditional Russian system again.⁸³ This change in the Soviet Union had accompanied the increased emphasis placed by Stalin on economic construction. Faced with the expectation that they should produce students of high academic standards, rather than experimenting with the education of a new socialist man, Soviet educators turned again to the old educational ideas. Something of the same process may have occurred in China since articles which did appear on Confucius' educational policies coincided with the emphasis on economic construction brought about by the five-year plan of 1953-1957. During this period, more emphasis was placed on nurturing the individual capabilities of the students, a policy which was

82. See for example Chen Yuan-hui, "The Reactionary Political Design of Pragmatic Education", HCS, No. 9, September 1955, translated in Extracts from China Mainland Magazines, No. 14, 1955, pp. 39-46.

83. William R. Fraser, "The Traditional and the Distinctive in Soviet Education", in Edmund J. King (ed.), Communist Education, London: Methuen and Co., 1963, pp. 78-96.

explicitly referred to in articles which drew parallels between Confucian ideas and the educational needs of China in the socialist period.

In 1954, Kuang-ming Daily published four articles which debated the question of Confucian theories on education and its contemporary relevance. The first was written by Hsü Meng-ying.

Hsü argued that the Confucian aim in education was to educate people to practice the policy of benevolent government by teaching "the ways of the chün-tzu."⁸⁴ Hsü considered that Confucius had broadened the meaning of chün-tzu, so that instead of referring simply to a member of the aristocratic class, it had been elevated to a concept which placed more emphasis on behaviour. In this way, it need not be restricted to one level of society. Hsü also claimed that Confucius had stated that education should be made available to more people as a country's wealth increased, drawing a parallel with conditions in China then. As socialist construction raised the level of China's well-being so Hsü believed universal education would be gradually implemented.

He listed three major principles of Confucian education. These were that students should have reverence for their teachers; that lessons should be reviewed; and that the teacher should know the individual characteristics of the students. He quoted

84. Hsü Meng-ying 許夢瀛, "K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang"
 孔子的教育思想 (Confucius' Educational Thought),
KMJP, 14 June 1954.

Mencius to illustrate the first principle:

Yu Jo said, 'Is it only among men that it is so? There is the ch'i-lin among animals; the feng-huang among birds; Mount T'ai among mounds and ant hills; and rivers and seas among rain pools. Still, they are the same in kind. So the sages among mankind are also the same in kind. But they stand out from their fellows, and rise above the level, and from the birth of mankind till now, there has never been one so complete as Confucius.⁸⁵

Confucius was said to have taught according to the ability of each student. This was reflected in his having given different answers to different students for the same question. From this it could be seen that the methods and requirements of teaching meant that tuition should be on an individual basis, and that teachers should set an example by being enthusiastic about learning.⁸⁶

The conclusion which Hsü reached was that Confucius occupied an important place, not just in Chinese, but also in world educational history.⁸⁷ By being the first to teach privately, he had made education available to a larger group of people. While Hsü both at the beginning and end of his article had stated that there were good and bad points in Confucian educational thought, his article as a whole presented only the positive

85. This quote comes from the Mencius. See Ian-chou ta-hsüeh chung-wen hsi meng-tzu i-chu hsiao-chu, Meng-tzu i-chu 孟子譯注 (Mencius with Annotations), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1960, p. 64. The ch'i-lin is a mythical giraffe-like animal, and the feng-huang a phoenix-like bird.

86. Hsü Meng-ying, "K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang".

87. Ibid.

features. His qualification stating that Confucian education had negative aspects seems to have been largely designed to forestall any possible criticism.

If so, this ploy certainly did not succeed, since Shen I immediately replied to the article, arguing that Hsü had given an unbalanced view of Confucius, making too high a claim for his achievements.⁸⁸ He claimed that Hsü had

almost turned Confucius into a modern educationalist by practically forcing the ancient teaching principles of Confucius into formulas so that they can be fitted onto contemporary progressive educational principles such as the 'authority of the teacher', 'reviewing lessons', 'consolidation of knowledge', and 'understanding the individual characteristics of each student.'⁸⁹

He argued that while it was correct to try to assess Confucius fairly, it was wrong to exaggerate the claims made about him. As an example, he pointed to the quotes Hsü had given to support his claim that Confucius' students had great respect for him as a teacher. These quotes, Shen wrote, indicated rather that Confucius had stood for a blind worship of teachers which was very different to the modern concept of respect.

This critical article brought two responses from Ch'u Shu-sen, a teacher in an experimental primary school in Kiangsu. In the first article, Ch'u argued that Shen, in claiming that Hsü had wanted to use ancient educational theories in modern

88. Shen I 沈沂, "Tu K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang i-hou" 讀孔子的教育思想以後 (After Reading "Confucius' Educational Thought"), KMTP, 28 June 1954.

89. Ibid.

society had misunderstood Hsü's article. All Hsü had been arguing for, Ch'u claimed, was a selective use of Confucian ideas, in line with the policy of socialist systems critically inheriting ideas from the past.⁹⁰ He also disagreed with Shen, arguing that Confucius' teaching principles were still relevant. He wrote,

Who can deny that Confucius' teaching principles have great practical significance? We cannot because the times are different, and social systems and educational aims and requirements are different, deny the historical place of those educationalists who historically had propagated culture, thus destroying their educational principles.⁹¹

He mentioned in support that the writings of the seventeenth century Czech educator Comenius and the nineteenth century Russian educators Polinsky and Ushinsky were still referred to in Soviet educational circles.

In his next article, he attempted to make a balanced evaluation of Confucius' educational thought, listing both its positive and negative aspects. He argued that Hsü had neglected the class character of Confucius' "way of the chün-tzu", disagreeing with Hsü's claim that the way of the chün-tzu could be spread among all strata of society.⁹² On the positive side,

90. Ch'u Shu-sen 褚樹森, "Tui yen-chiu K'ung-tzu chiao-yü ssu-hsiang te chi-tien i-chien" 對研究孔子教育思想的幾點意見 (A Few Suggestions on Conducting Research into Confucius' Educational Thought), KMJP, 9 August 1954.

91. Ibid.

92. Ch'u Shu-sen, "Tui K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang i wen te i-chien" 對「孔子的教育思想」一文之意見 (Suggestions on the Article "Confucius' Educational Thought"), KMJP, 4 October 1954.

he pointed out educational merits of Confucius which he believed Hsü had omitted. He claimed that Confucius had advocated the active pursuit of knowledge, quoting Confucius that "it is better to like something than to know it, and it is better to take pleasure in something than to like it."⁹³ He also praised Confucius' use of concrete examples in teaching, and his deep understanding of human psychology.⁹⁴

These four articles were published between June 14th and October 4th 1954. Nothing seems to have appeared on Confucian education again until the Hundred Flowers period. What this mini-debate revealed was that there was still significant support for Confucian educational ideas. All three had acknowledged that Confucius had been a great educator in his time, although Shen and Ch'u had also offered some criticisms.

During the Hundred Flowers period, another article by Hsü Meng-ying was published in the journal People's Education in February 1957. It was intended to be the beginning of a series of articles on the history of Chinese education, but the rest of the series failed to appear.

This was the first article to be published on ancient educational theories since People's Education was first appeared in 1950. The most prestigious journal on education it had on the whole reflected contemporary interests in education,

93. This is a quote from the Analects. See Yang Po-chün 楊伯峻, Lun-yü i-chu 論語譯注 (The Analects with Annotations), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1953, p. 65.

94. Ch'u Shu-sen, "Tui K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang i wen te i-chien".

including by contrast over seventy translations of articles by Russian educators in its early years.

The break between the Soviet Union and China can be traced back to 1956. From this period on, China began to search for its own solutions and ways of development. Russian writers date the move away from Soviet educational methods to this time acknowledging that

by the end of 1956, the middle and higher institutions of learning departed more and more from extensive reliance on Soviet curricular and textbooks used prior to this.⁹⁵

Certainly the criticisms expressed during the Hundred Flowers period revealed dissatisfaction with the enormous Soviet influence on education.⁹⁶ Mao himself was said to have exclaimed at a talk with heads of provincial and municipal education departments in 1957 "Is the Ministry of Education a Soviet Ministry of Education, or a Chinese Ministry of Education?"⁹⁷ By 1957 a writer in People's Education complained,

to be an educational worker in new China, and not understand a little bit of Confucius' educational thinking reveals inadequacies. Now there are some teachers who, when talking about educationalists,

95. O.B. Borisov and B.T. Koloskov, Soviet-Chinese Relations 1945-1970, Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1975, p. 104.

96. See the criticisms quoted in Roderick MacFarquhar, The Hundred Flowers.

97. Mao Tse-tung, "A Talk with Heads of Education Departments or Bureaus of Seven Provinces and Municipalities", Unselected Works of Mao Tse-tung 1957, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1976, p. 91.

seem to know a great deal about Dewey and Makarenko⁹⁸ (and of course this should be the case) but when it comes to educationalists of our country like Confucius, they cannot say more than a few words about them. We can't call this a normal phenomenon.⁹⁹

In his 1957 article Hsü Meng-ying made a number of points similar to those he made in 1954, showing that he had ignored or disagreed with the criticisms that Shen and Ch'u had offered. Again, he gave a completely positive evaluation of Confucius, claiming that his ideas were still relevant for education.¹⁰⁰ This seemed to contradict the editorial introduction to the article, which held that while one should learn from his good points, the "poisons" of Confucius should still be eliminated.¹⁰¹

People's Education in 1957 also published a book review of Li Ch'ang-chih's book on Confucius,¹⁰² and another review of Shen Kuan-ch'un's book on educational thought in ancient China,¹⁰³ suggesting that there was really a minor revival

98. Anton Makarenko was a Soviet educator who came into prominence under Stalin. His complete works were translated and published in China in the fifties.

99. Hu yen ho ch'ih 呼延河池, "Chieh-hsiao K'ung-tzu te ku-shih" 介绍"孔子的故事" (Introducing The Story of Confucius), in Jen-min chiao-yü (People's Education), No. 1, 1957, p. 63.

100. Hsü Meng-ying, "Ileh-t'an K'ung-tzu te chiao-hsüeh-fa ssu-hsiang" 略谈孔子的教学法思想 (A Brief Discussion of the Thinking of Confucius' Teaching Methods), Jen-min chiao-yü, No. 2, 1957, pp. 27-29.

101. Ibid., p. 27.

102. Hu yen ho ch'ih, "Chieh-hsiao K'ung-tzu te ku-shih", p. 40 and p. 63.

103. Mao Li-jui 毛禮銳, "Shen chu chung-kuo ku-tai chiao-yü ho chiao-yü ssu-hsiang p'ing-chieh" 沈君"中国古代教育和教育思想"序 (A Critical Introduction to Shen's Ancient Chinese Education and Educational Thought), Jen-min chiao-yü, No. 6, 1957, pp. 58-61.

of interest in Confucian ideas in the educational world.

1957 also saw the first book to appear on Confucius' educational thinking since 1949. Written by Ch'en Ching-p'an of Peking Normal University, it was compiled from lecture notes for a course he had given on the "History of Chinese Education".¹⁰⁴ The assessment that Ch'en made of Confucius' educational ideas was also very positive.

He wrote that Confucius had referred to two models of behaviour in his aims of education, that of the sage and that of the chün-tzu. Since Confucius had said little about the sages and even claimed that he could not be classed as one, the main model was that of the chün-tzu. According to Ch'en, "chün-tzu" for Confucius meant those who loved and cared for the people, and who would provide them with peace and security.¹⁰⁵ This was similar to the view proposed by Hsü Meng-ying in 1954. The chün-tzu were to practice self-cultivation (hsiu-yang) on the basis of li and jen, which Ch'en claimed formed the basic content of Confucian education.¹⁰⁶ Ch'en argued that Confucius had, in including the notion of jen, added a humane element the old aristocratic rites. Although both jen and li had a class

104. Ch'en Ching-p'an 陳景磐, K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang 孔子的教育思想 (The Educational Thought of Confucius), Wuhan: Hu-peì jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1957.

105. Ibid., pp. 19-24.

106. Ibid., p. 27.

basis, this was simply because of the nature of the era that Confucius lived in.¹⁰⁷

Entering into the debate on whether traditional Chinese values could be inherited, Ch'en argued that many Confucian ideas in education could still be inherited. He justified this by the common practice of quoting from Mao that

contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy.¹⁰⁸

Although Ch'en had acknowledged the class character of jen and li, he believed, following Feng Yu-lan, that these concepts could somehow be separated from their class contents. Treated in this way as abstract qualities, they could be relevant to socialist society.¹⁰⁹

Ch'en made similar claims to those put forward in 1954 about Confucius' teaching methods. Besides mentioning the points Hsü had outlined, he also argued that Confucius had emphasised the three stages of learning, thinking, and practice in his teaching methods and that he had made traditional

107. Ibid., p. 27.

108. An English translation of this quote, used by Ch'en in ibid., p. 62, is found in Mao Tse-tung, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War", in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 2, pp. 195-211, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 209.

109. Ch'en Ching-p'an, K'ung-tzu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang, pp. 60-63.

material interesting for the students.¹¹⁰ Ch'en also praised Confucius' use of music in teaching.

Another noteworthy characteristic of Confucius' method was that he had behaved so as to set an example for his students in language similar to that used by Hsü. Ch'en wrote that Confucius' students had loved him as the sun and moon, and as they would love their own father. He also drew on the Russian educators Ushinsky and Kalinin for support for his view of the importance of the teacher's character.¹¹¹

In the fifties then, while there was very little material published specifically on Confucius' educational ideas, what was written suggests that educators still held his ideas in high regard. The criticisms made were relatively minor in nature. The brief revivals of interest in Confucian education coincided with the greater emphasis on the quality of education in 1954, and the beginnings of the break with the Soviet model of education at the end of 1956. It was perhaps natural for educators to turn back to Chinese sources for inspiration at the time, but it was a very different model which was actually in 1958 to replace the Soviet model. During the Great Leap Forward Mao drew on the Yen-an experience to promote the idea of combining study with labour.¹¹² Confucian ideas on education

110. Ibid., p. 43.

111. Ibid., p. 55.

112. See for example Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Chengtu Conference", in Stuart Schram, (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974, pp. 96-124.

having even less in common with this new system than the Soviet system, were not mentioned again until the sixties.

Concluding Remarks

Two features stand out in discussions of Confucius in the fifties. In comparison with the sixties and seventies, comparatively little was written about Confucius. It was simply not a major issue. Secondly, what was written about Confucius tended on the whole to praise him, although there was considerable diversity of opinions and critical articles sometimes appeared. While the tendency was to give a sympathetic, largely traditional interpretation of Confucius, no consensus of opinion was reached, in marked contrast to the early sixties when opinion was almost universally positive, and the seventies when it was unanimously negative.

Both of these facts suggest that in the early fifties at least, tradition was not seen as a major barrier to social change. Indeed the influence of tradition had dissipated considerably since the beginning of the century. If the fifties lacked the fervour of the May Fourth attacks, it was mostly because Confucianism seemed no longer to loom so large in Chinese life. Relegated to a minor role by the acceptance of communism, some writers began to look for points of compatibility between Confucianism and communism. Arguments that Confucian ethics, and to a lesser extent Confucian ideas on education, could still be relevant to society were made by a number of writers, although

there were, of course, no suggestion that Confucianism itself be completely embraced again. While there were still views expressed which were pro-Confucian in outlook, this cannot be equated with the pro-Confucian outlook of earlier periods. Confucianism could never again hold a supreme position as an ideology, nor would Confucius ever again be regarded as K'ang Yu-wei had seen him: "the Sagely King, the Everlasting Teacher, the Protector of the People, and the High Priest of the World." If Confucianism was to be inherited at all, this was to be measured by the criteria of another ideology, that of Marxism.

Evaluations of Confucius in the fifties drew on the research of the thirties and forties which had reduced Confucius to the status of a historical figure. Where the fifties differed from this period was in the extent of the attempt to use a Marxist analysis to history. The new approach meant that firstly more basic questions on history needed to be answered. What, given the Marxist view of history, had been the nature of the period Confucius lived in? What class did he belong to and whose interests had he represented? Uncertainty over such questions contributed to the lack of consensus of opinion on evaluating Confucius.

Despite the introduction of a Marxist approach to history, many intellectuals obviously were still unfamiliar with it, sometimes merely adding Marxist terminology to a traditional analysis. Intellectuals writing in the fifties had had

themselves mostly received a classical education, and it was this that they often fell back on when they were uncertain over what Marxism implied.

In contrast to the May Fourth period, when the intellectuals denouncing Confucius had been young radicals eager to change society, those writing on Confucius in the fifties on the whole belonged to a quieter, more scholarly mould. Most were experienced historians who had already been writing on history for many years. Apart from Kuo Mo-jo and Fan Wen-lan, most prominent historians only became interested in Marxism after 1949, and their works were equally influenced by older ideas. Young historians trained in Marxist methods had not yet emerged, and important political figures were more concerned with the present than the ancient past.

The Hundred Flowers period revealed quite clearly that many intellectuals still retained considerable reverence for Confucius. With the break with the Soviet Union, a renewed spirit of nationalism led naturally to an interest in the roots of Chinese culture. The extent of this reverence for the past was no doubt one reason for the adoption of the Great Leap Forward slogan of "more modern, less ancient." It was only in the beginning of the sixties that for the first time in the People's Republic, tradition and Confucianism became major political issues.

Chapter III

THE EARLY SIXTIES

Historical Setting

In the first few years of the sixties, the policies of the Great Leap Forward were largely abandoned, and it was admitted that the statistical claims of its success had been exaggerated.¹ In 1960 all Soviet technicians were withdrawn, taking with them the technical plans and blueprints of projects they had been working on.² Three years of natural economic disaster followed. China faced real economic difficulties. The spirit of optimism characteristic of much of the fifties disappeared, and a more sober mood emerged. More conservative policies were followed in a number of fields, peasants were again allowed private plots, and collective dining halls were largely abandoned. This rejection of the Great Leap Forward policies weakened Mao's own position somewhat. In the early sixties, he retreated to the "second line", leaving administrative matters to Liu Shao-ch'i, who

1. Leo Orleans, Professional Manpower and Education in Communist China, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961, p. 2.

2. The events and circumstances surrounding the withdrawal of the Soviet experts is discussed by a Soviet scientist in China at the time, in Mikhail A. Klochko, Soviet Scientists in Red China, New York: Frederick Praeger, 1964.

took over as head of state.³ Liu's own penchant seemed to be for more careful planning, and a greater emphasis on order, in contrast to Mao's rather flamboyant style.⁴

Some of the greatest changes which occurred in this period were in the field of education. After the rapid expansion of 1958, the Minister for Education announced in 1960 that henceforth more emphasis would be placed on quality rather than quantity in education.⁵ Policies of the Great Leap Forward were gradually reversed. Worker universities, and red and expert colleges were dismantled, while the half-work half-study system was no longer promoted.⁶ The new policies had far-reaching effects as well on universities and

3. Mao had already made the decision to step down in 1958 - "Decision approving Comrade Mao Tse-tung's proposal that he will not stand as candidate for Chairman of the People's Republic of China for the next term of office", adopted by the 8th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at its 6th Plenary Session, 10 December 1958, in Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee September 1956-April 1969, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1971, Vol. 1, pp. 121-122.

4. For a discussion of the differences between Mao and Liu in style of work, see Lowell Dittmer, Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

5. Yang Hsiu-feng, "Actively Carry Out the Reform of the School System to Bring about Greater, Faster, Better and more Economical Results in the Development of Education", translated in Current Background, 1960, No. 623, pp. 11-19.

6. Donald J. Munro, "Egalitarian Ideal and Educational Fact in Communist China", in J. Lindbeck (ed.), China: Management of a Revolutionary Society, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971, pp. 256-301.

research academies where most intellectuals worked. In 1959 a directive was issued concerned with the handling of "rightists", and on October 1st 1960, many of those who had been previously branded as "white flag" had their labels removed,⁷ paving the way for old professors and technical experts to once again play a major role in university life.

The most important indication that a new trend was to be followed in the universities came in a speech given by Ch'en I in August 1961. Making clear that he was speaking not as an individual but in the name of the State Council and the Party, Ch'en I went on to give what was essentially a new theory on the relationship of "redness" and "expertness". Political consciousness, redness, was to be manifested through vocational work, and not to be judged solely in terms of political activity. The tendency to brand as expert those who buried themselves in books was wrong. As well, Ch'en stated that intellectuals could not necessarily be expected to have deep-rooted Marxist convictions, it would be enough if they worked with the party. Even his own mind, Ch'en commented, still contained traces of the ideas of Confucius and Mencius.⁸

7. "Only Through Showing Repentance Can Rightists Have a Bright Future: Labels of Another Group of Rightists in Shansi Province who have Shown Real Repentance are Removed", Shansi Daily, 30 September 1960, Translated in Survey of China Mainland Press (supplement), No. 53, p. 17.

8. Ch'en I 陳毅, "Tui Pei-ching-shih kao-teng ylan-hsiao ying-chieh pi-yeh sheng te chiang-hua" 對北京市高等院校應屆畢業學生的講話 (Speech to this Year's Graduates from Peking's Higher Institutions), Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien 中國青年 (China Youth), 1961, No. 17, pp. 2-5.

In March 1961, Red Flag carried an article which called for a revival of the Hundred Flowers policy, although this time it was made quite clear that the freedom of discussion was to be limited to academic matters, and not to be extended to politics.⁹

In universities, a wide range of new courses were introduced in 1961 and 1962, a part of the new Hundred Flowers spirit. These courses partly corresponded to the teachers' own interests and specialities. These included courses on western philosophy, and even western economic thought. In 1962, Peking University added such courses as "Historical Sources for Chinese Philosophy" taught by Feng Yu-lan, and a course on "General Introduction to Chinese Buddhist Philosophy" taught by Jen Chi-yü.¹⁰ Courses were extensively re-arranged in the academic year beginning in the summer of 1961. Veteran teachers were placed in charge of many subjects, and given the responsibility of training younger teachers.¹¹ Both students

9. "Stand Firm on the Policy of Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom and a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend in Academic Research", Translated in Survey of China Mainland Press, 1961, No. 2451, pp. 1-7.

10. I Wo-sheng, "Education", Communist China 1962, Vol. 2, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1963, p. 180.

11. "An-hui ta-hsüeh chu-i fa-hui lao-chiao-shih tso-yung"
 安徽大學注意發揮老教師作用 (Anhui University
 Pays Attention to Developing the Role of Old Teachers), JMPP,
 7 July 1961.

and younger teachers were admonished to show respect to the old teachers. Old professors were given assistants to help them in their research, and were to be guaranteed enough time free of administrative duties to carry out teaching and research, while some of those who were very old were to spend all their time on research, training their research assistants to carry on after them.¹²

The new Hundred Flowers spirit was reflected in the holding of a great number of academic conferences and seminars organised within universities. Whereas during the Great Leap Forward, students and indigenous experts might be called on to give papers, these were now given by experts and veteran teachers.

The withdrawal of Soviet technicians and teachers in 1960 was part of a gradual worsening of relationships between China and the Soviet Union. This affected intellectuals, who whether or not they agreed with the policy of learning from the Soviet Union had at least been able to use the Soviet model as a guideline for carrying out their work. Now, with this removed, there was the question of what would replace it. The policies developed during the Yen-an period and favoured by Mao had been largely discredited by their association with the Great Leap

12. "Fa-hui lao-nien chiao-shih chuan-chang, t'i-kao ch'ing-nien chiao-shih shui-p'ing" 發揮老年教師專長, 提高青年教師水平 (Develop the Specialities of Old Teachers, Raise the Standard of Young Teachers), KMJP, 29 March 1962.

Forward. Despite a more liberal academic climate, it was by no means possible to openly advocate western theories. It is not surprising then that the traditional Chinese ideas again became influential.

In historical studies, the break with the Soviet Union was reflected in a number of ways. There was a move away from an acceptance of Soviet historical theories. History journals no longer carried translations of Soviet works, and after 1960 Chinese and Soviet historians ceased to exchange visits. All of this was regarded by Soviet historians as ingratitude.¹³

Another effect of the removal of Soviet influence was some questioning of the extent to which Marxist analysis could be applied to historical questions. In 1962, Liu Chieh was said to have argued that while Marxist class analysis was appropriate for foreign and modern history, it was not appropriate for analysing ancient Chinese history, which had had a development of its own.¹⁴ In June 1962, Feng Ting also argued that philosophers and historians should also learn from the west and that many of the questions brought up by bourgeois

13. R.V. Vyatkin and S.L. Tikhvinsky, "Some Questions of Historical Science in the Chinese People's Republic", in Albert Feuerwerker (ed.), History in Communist China, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1968, pp. 331-355.

14. Chang Yü-lou 張玉樓, "Ma-k'e-ssu chu-i chieh-chi fen-hsi fang-fa ho li-shih yen-chiu" 馬克思主義階級分析方法
和歷史研究 (The Methodology of Marxist Class Analysis and Historical Research), LSYC, 1963, No. 3, pp. 27-44.

social scientists were worth studying.¹⁵ In the new context, it seemed possible to revive some of the traditional historical methods.

Chinese historians began to turn once again to their own past, with which of course they were most familiar. Less attention was given to world history, Chinese culture and history began to be regarded more and more as a source of pride, and there were a number of studies of the contributions of China to the rest of the world. Chu Ch'ien-chih again wrote on his theories of the effect of Confucian philosophy on western philosophy while Ma Nun-tung argued that Hui Sheng had discovered America a thousand years before Columbus.¹⁶ Books began to appear on how to learn from the study habits of the ancients.¹⁷ The new interest and awareness of the past was reflected in a resurgence of old plays and operas. New plays

15. Merle Goldman, "The Unique 'Blooming and Contending' of 1961-62", China Quarterly, 1969, No. 37, p. 62.

16. Chu Ch'ien-chih 朱謙之, "Shih-ch'i-pa shih-chi hsi-fang che-hsleh-chia te K'ung-tzu kuan" 十七八世紀西方哲學家的孔子觀 (Western Philosophers' Views on Confucius in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries), JMJP, 9 March 1962. See also Vyatkin and Tikhvinsky, "Some Questions of Historical Science in the Chinese People's Republic", p. 343.

17. See for example Wu T'ien-shih 吳天石 and Ma Ying-po 馬榮伯, T'an-t'an wo-kuo ku-tai hsieh-chieh te hsieh-hsi ching-shen ho hsieh-hsi fang-fa 談談我國古代學者的學習精神和學習方法 (On the Spirit and Method of Learning of Our Country's Ancient Scholars), Peking: Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan-she, 1964.

by such writers as Wu Han and T'ien Han dealt with prominent historical figures. The use of history as an allegory to comment on the present was also prevalent, the most celebrated case being Wu Han's Hai Jui Dismissed from Office. Chinese historical figures began to be studied in more detail. Some moves in this direction had already been made around 1957, coinciding with the beginning of the Sino-Soviet split,¹⁸ but had been interrupted by the Great Leap Forward. Related to this, considerable debate was carried out on the issue of historicism, which raised the question of whether a historical figure should be assessed by contemporary standards, or in the context of the time in which he lived. Any attempt to make decisions about the period in which a figure lived would of course lead again to the question of periodisation.

The Great Leap Forward slogan of "more recent, less ancient" was also modified. Ch'en Po-ta, who had coined the slogan in 1959, now stated that it had been misunderstood and oversimplified.¹⁹ It was not to be taken to mean that the study of archaeology and history was not necessary, or that

18. Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-1957, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974, chapter 4 discusses Chinese reactions to this.

19. Ch'en Po-ta 陳伯達, "P'i-p'an te chi-ch'eng ho hsin te t'an-so" 批判的繼承和新的探索 (Critical Inheritance and New Investigations), HC, 1959, No. 13, pp. 36-39 and 43.

ancient history should not be studied in schools.

The years 1961 and 1962 saw the most animated and lively debates on Confucius since the Communists had come to power. 1962 was the 2,440th anniversary of Confucius' death.²⁰ Nearly every university and historical association held meetings to discuss Confucius' teachings.²¹ Confucius' birthplace at Ch'u-fu was opened to the public, attended by an average of 30,000 people daily.²² Some of the activity amounted to a return of Confucian worship. This revival of interest in Confucius received support from the highest levels when Liu Shao-ch'i called for a conference to discuss Confucius' philosophy. Organised by Chou Yang in the name of the Historical Institute of Shangtung, Confucius' native province. It met at Chinan from 6th to 12th November, with over 160 philosophers and historians taking part. Although by no means unanimous in their opinions, most gave favourable interpretations of Confucius.

20. Even this detail was debated, with people questioning whether the 2,440th anniversary of Confucius' death was 1961 and 1962. See "K'ung-tzu shih-shih erh-ch'ien ssu-pai ssu-shih nien shih chin-nien hai-shih ming-nien" 孔子逝世二四四〇年是今年還是明年 (Is the 2,440th Anniversary of Confucius' Death This Year or Next Year?), KMJP, 20 December 1961.

21. A number of articles were published in the KMJP on these meetings. See for example 21 January, 15 February, 18 February and 26 October 1962.

22. "K'ung-tzu ku-hsiang ch'u-fu hsien chü-hsing ch'uan-t'ung te 'lin-ch'ien-hui'" 孔子故鄉曲阜縣舉行傳統的'林前會' (The Traditional 'Gathering in Front of the Forest' Held in Confucius' Native Place: Ch'u-fu), KMJP, 8 April 1962.

The inheritability of Confucian morality again became a major issue during this period. Liu Chieh, Feng Yu-lan and Wu Han were amongst those who claimed that the concept of jen was still pertinent to contemporary society.²³ In 1963, Wu Han claimed that under certain conditions and limitations, individuals of the ruling class undertook actions compatible with the interests of the people.

It would seem that at this time there was an attempt to integrate Confucian ethics with Communist theory. Significantly, Liu Shao-ch'i's How to be a Good Communist was republished in 1962.²⁴ Its debt to the Confucian concept of self-cultivation was to be pointed out after the Cultural Revolution.²⁵

Changes again began to occur in China after Mao issued his call to "never forget class struggle" in the second half

23. Merle Goldman, "The Role of History in Party Struggle, 1962-4", China Quarterly, 1972, No. 51, pp. 500-519.

24. Liu Shao-ch'i 劉少奇, Lun kung-ch'an-tang yian te hsin-yang 論共產黨的修養 (How to be a Good Communist), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1962. Sixty million copies of this revised edition were printed in 1962. Liu himself was said to have visited Confucius' birthplace in November 1962. See Han Suyin, Wind in the Tower: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution 1949-1975, Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1976, p. 187.

25. Wu Ch'i-ping 武齊兵, "Ku-ch'ui ch'ung-yang fu-ku, chiu shih mai-kuo, chiu shih fu-pi: po Chou Yang 'ch'uan-p'an hsi-hua' 'ch'uan-p'an chi-ch'eng' te fan-tung li-lun" 鼓吹崇洋復古就是賣國，就是復辟——駁周揚“全盤西化”“全盤繼承”的反動理論 (To Advocate Worship of Foreign Things and Return to Old Things is Treason and Restoration: in Refutation of Chou Yang's Reactionary Doctrine of 'Total Westernisation' and 'Total Inheritance'"), KMJP, 28 August 1970.

of 1962.²⁶ In 1963, the campaign to "learn from Lei Feng" was launched, leading to an increased emphasis on class education. It was felt that the young knew little about the exploitation of the old society. Students in schools and universities were encouraged to take part in writing the "four histories" of village, commune, factories, and families.²⁷ This brought the emphasis on history back once again to the recent past. It was also as part of this movement that investigations were made in Confucius' own home town, to show that class divisions also existed amongst his descendants.²⁸

The new emphasis on class struggle also had its effects on intellectual circles in 1963. Some of those intellectuals who had been active in 1961 and 1962 now came under attack. Liu Chieh was criticised for having contended in 1962 that since class analysis was a modern development, it could not be applied to an understanding of the past. Newspapers and

26. Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at the Tenth Plenum", 24 September 1962, in Stuart Schram (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974, pp. 188-189.

27. Meng Teng-chin 蒙登進 and Niu Hsin-fang 牛欣芳 "'Wu shih' chiaio-yü te jen-shih lun i-i" "五史教育的認識論意義" (The Epistemological Significance of 'Five History' Education), CHYC, 1964, No. 4, pp. 17-23. This was sometimes referred to as the Four Histories, sometimes as Five, with a division of family histories into worker and peasant families.

28. Ho Ling-hsiu 何齡修, "Ch'ing-k'an 'sheng-jen chia' te 'tao-te'" 請看「聖人」的「道德」 (Please Look at the 'Morality' of the 'Sages' Family'), KMJP, 23 September 1964.

scholarly journals published criticisms of his views, and academic societies, including the historical societies in Peking and Canton, called special forums to denounce his arguments as anti-Marxist.²⁹ Wu Han was criticised for advocating that moral values could still be inherited, while Feng Yu-lan came under attack for his essay "On the Methods of Philosophical History".

In philosophical circles, Yang Hsien-chen's theory of "combining two into one" was denounced. It was contrasted with Mao's theory which took "one divides into two" as the major law of dialectics. Compared to Mao's formulation, Yang's conception seemed to suggest that contradictions could reconcile themselves in harmony, a belief that had obvious similarities to strains of traditional and Confucian thought. It was argued that this had been used to support such ideas as the dying out of class struggle, class harmony and class co-operation.³⁰

Criticism of intellectuals became more heated in 1964. A number of them were attacked on the grounds that they were supporters of humanism, and the theory of abstract human nature. These included the criticisms directed at Feng Ting, at Chou

29. Cheng Feng, "Cultural Affairs", Communist China 1963, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1964, Vol. 2, pp. 25-26.

30. Donald Munro, "The Yang Hsien-chen Affair", China Quarterly, 1965, No. 22, pp. 75-82.

Ku-ch'eng for his theories on aesthetics and at Shao Ch'üan-lin for his theory of portraying "middle characters" in literature.³¹

A debate was also waged in historical circles in 1963 and 1964 over the role of the Taiping general, Li Hsiu-ch'eng. Controversy centred on his confessions after his capture. Ch'i Pen-yü, writing in 1963, accused Li of having betrayed the peasant revolution and capitulated to the landlord classes.³² The concept of capitulationism and restoration were at that time also being brought up in connection with the Soviet Union, and their extension to an understanding of history can be seen as an offshoot of this. They were, of course, to become very important concepts in historical discussions in China after the Cultural Revolution.

Mao's concern over the direction which China was taking was also reflected in the attention he began to give to the question of revolutionary successors.³³ Unless youth were imbued with the spirit of hard struggle, he believed China could follow the same path as the Soviet Union. Yet over the next year or so, Mao must have decided that while his ideas were theoretically acknowledged, in practice they were not being

31. Adam Oliver, "Rectification of Mainland China Intellectuals, 1964-65", Asian Survey, October 1965, Vol. 5, No. 10, pp. 475-490.

32. Ch'i Pen-yü 戚本禹, "P'ing Li Hsiu-ch'eng tsu-shu" (A Critique of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Self-criticism), LEXC, 1963, No. 4, pp. 27-42.

33. "Mao Tse-tung, On Educational Revolution", Chinese Education, 1974, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 7-47.

completely carried out. In November 1965, Yao Wen-yüan published his attack on Wu Han's play Hai Jui Dismissed from Office, starting the succession of events that would swiftly build up to the Cultural Revolution.

Confucius and Class

By late 1959 and 1960, the volume of articles published on the classical philosophies had begun to increase.³⁴ Many of those who had written in the fifties started again to voice their opinions on the evaluations of Confucius, and on an assessment of his class. If anything, evaluations were even more positive. The wave of interest in historicism, which coincided with the 2440th anniversary of Confucius' death, gave a Marxist rationale on which these positive assessments could be based. It allowed evaluations of the contribution made by Confucius to be made more directly in relation to the period in which he lived.

34. In 1959, for example, the editorial board of Philosophical Research published a collection of articles on Lao-tzu and in 1961, a similar collection was approved on Chuang-tzu. See Che-hsüeh yen-chiu p'ien-chi-pu (ed.), Lao-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun chi 老子哲學討論集 (Collected Articles on the Philosophy of Lao-tzu), reprinted in Hong Kong: Ch'ung-wen shu-tien, 1972, idem, Chuang-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun chi 莊子哲學討論集 (Collected Articles on the Philosophy of Chuang-tzu), reprinted in Hong Kong: Wen-ch'ang shu-chu, no date.

Generally, in the sixties those writing on Confucius showed more of an awareness of the need to use class analysis. Whereas during the Hundred Flowers period, old scholars like Hsiung Shih-li could write on Confucianism with no mention of class analysis at all,³⁵ by the early sixties a decade of Communist re-education had left its mark on intellectuals. Even if they did not agree with or fully understand Marxist writings on class, they were at least more adept in handling these notions than the scholars of the fifties.

The question of periodisation continued to be debated during the sixties, but with less intensity. Kuo Mo-jo's scheme had by this time gained the most support, with Fan Wen-lan's scheme also attracting some adherents. Other schemes were also put forward, but they seemed to have had relatively little influence. After ten years of intensive debate on periodisation in the fifties, it is not surprising that this topic aroused less controversy in the sixties. Writers, though, generally showed a greater awareness of the question of periodisation in their works, usually taking it into account in their evaluations of Confucius. How convinced some of these writers actually were about the importance of periodisation remains in doubt since both Liu Chieh and Feng Yu-lan were later to argue that some Confucian values transcended their historical period.

35. See Hsiung Shih-li 熊十力, Yüan-ju 原儒 (The Original Confucianism), first published in 1956, reprinted in Hong Kong: Lung-men shu-tien, 1970.

In discussions of Confucius in the early sixties, a rough division can be made between the period from Ch'en Po-ta's speech in May 1959 to early 1961, the second period beginning with the advent of a new "Hundred Flowers" policy in March 1961, and lasting through 1962. The earlier period can be seen as a prelude to the second period when the number of articles published increased dramatically in quantity.

In 1959, in one of the first articles published after the anti-rightist campaign, Liu Chieh-jen argued that Confucius had used jen in an attempt to liberate the class of slaves.³⁶ Feng Yu-lan in 1960 also gave a sympathetic and fairly straightforward account of Confucian ethics, with some reference to the question of periodisation and class background. He saw Confucius as a representative of the slave owning class who had turned to the landlord class.³⁷

Both Liu Chieh-jen and Feng Yu-lan were criticised in 1960 for their views.³⁸ Amongst Feng's critics were a group

36. Liu Chieh-jen 劉介人, "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang t'i-hsi ch'u-t'an" 孔子思想體系初探 (A Preliminary Investigation of Confucius' System of Thought), KMJP, 1 November 1959.

37. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu" 論孔子 (On Confucius), first published in KMJP, 22 and 29 July 1960. Reprinted in KFCHTLC, pp. 78-95.

38. Liu was criticised by Chang Shih-feng 章士風, "K'ung-tzu te jen-hsüeh pu-shih nu-li chieh-fang te li-lun" 孔子的仁學不是奴隸解放的理論 (Confucius' philosophy of jen is not a theory for the emancipation of slaves), KMJP, 27 March 1960, p. 5. Feng was criticised by Li Ch'i-ch'ien 李啟謙, "Tui Feng Yu-lan hsien-shen lun-K'ung-tzu te ch'ien i-chien" 對馮友蘭先生《論孔子》的幾點意見 (A Few Points Concerning Mr. Feng Yu-lan's "On Confucius"), KMJP, 5 August 1960, p. 3.

of his final year philosophy students at Peking University. They particularly attacked Feng on the grounds that he had neglected class in his article "On Confucius". In a rather long article, they quoted extensively from Mao on the importance of stressing class, alleging that Feng had basically not changed his views since 1930.³⁹

This small burst of criticism in 1960 did not last for long and was followed in 1961 and 1962 by the most prolific outpourings of articles on Confucius since the Communists had come to power. The announcement of a new Hundred Flowers policy in 1961 no doubt had much to do with this.

Opinions on Confucius' class stand expressed in 1961 and 1962 can be classified according to the periodisation scheme adopted. By far the greatest number of articles used Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation scheme, although they produced a variety of different interpretations of Confucius' class stand and class membership.

Yang Jung-kuo in a new article elaborated on the basic arguments he had put forward in the forties and fifties. He continued to argue that Confucius had belonged to the class of slave-owners who had worked for the benefit of the slave-owning class. Significantly, Yang seems to have been slightly

39. Ch'en Chih-shang 陳志尚 et al., "P'ing Feng Yu-lan hsien-sheng te lun K'ung-tzu" 評馮友蘭先生的《論孔子》 (A Critique of Mr. Feng Yu-lan's "On Confucius"), KMJP, 26 August 1960, p. 3.

more sympathetic in his overall assessment of Confucius than in his earlier writings; perhaps because of the influence of the general atmosphere of the period.⁴⁰ Jen Chi-yü was another writer who argued for this point of view. Both Yang and Jen believed that Confucius was opposed to the inscribing of legal codes onto tripods, which they saw as a move on the part of the newly arising legalist forces to overthrow the old Chou system of rule by rites. They saw this as evidence that Confucius had stood on the side of the interests of the slave-owning class. They also pointed to Confucius' hatred of the three Chi families who had carried out some of the rites traditionally reserved for the Chou princes. Confucius had even urged his other students to "strike the drum and attack" his student Jan Chiu, because he had helped the Chi family. Jen Chi-yü made an indirect attack on the kind of argument put forward by Kuo Mo-jo, writing that "those scholars who think that Confucius was sympathetic to the rebels lack the factual evidence for this."⁴¹

Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih basically adopted the same view as Yang and Jen, but they tended on the whole to say that Confucius' outlook had been guided by compromise. This view

40. Yang Jung-kuo, "Lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang" (On the Thought of Confucius) 論孔子思想, KTCHTLC, pp. 373-400.

41. Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈, "K'ung-tzu ch'eng-chih shang te po-shou li-ch'ang ho che-hsüeh shang te wei-hsin chu-i" 孔子政治上的保守立場和哲學上的唯心主義 (Confucius' Politically Conservative Stance and His Philosophical Idealism), KTCHTLC, p. 151.

was also reflected in their arguments on ethics, discussed in the next section. Like Jen Chi-yü, Kuan and Lin argued against Kuo Mo-jo's assessment of Confucius as a revolutionary.

Using the same examples as Kuo, they concluded that Confucius had actually stood on the side of the crumbling aristocratic slave-owning class, which wanted to preserve the old rites.

Both Kuan Feng and Kuo Mo-jo referred to the following extract from the Confucian Analects:

Kung-shan Fu-jao, when he was holding Pi, and in an attitude of rebellion, invited Confucius to join him. Confucius was inclined to go. Tzu-lu was displeased and said 'indeed you cannot go! Why must you go to see Kung-shan?' Confucius replied, 'Can it be without some reason that he has invited me? If anyone will employ me, may I not make an eastern Chou?'⁴²

Kuo Mo-jo had interpreted this to argue that Confucius had been prepared to help rebels, but Kuan and Lin gave it a different interpretation. They pointed out that Kung-shan pu-jao had been rebelling against the Chi family, who had already incurred Confucius' disapproval for usurping the Chou rites. If Confucius had been willing to support rebellions against the Duke of Lu, perhaps an argument could be made for saying he was a revolutionary. As it was, he was only prepared to overthrow representatives of the newly arising landlord class, a regressive step.⁴³

42. This translation is based on Legge, pp. 256-257.

43. Kuan Feng 閻鋒 and Lin Yü-shih 林聿時, "Lun K'ung-tzu" 論孔子 (On Confucius), KTCHTLC, pp. 255-258.

Kuo Mo-jo didn't answer their article, but Feng Yu-lan wrote a reply. He based his argument on an analysis of the terms used by Confucius. Feng disagreed with the views expressed by Kuan and Lin, claiming that they had used Chao Chi-pin's distinctions between the classes jen and min as a basis for their argument.⁴⁴ Feng disagreed with this distinction, arguing that rather than denoting a particular class in the Spring and Autumn period, jen had been an all-embracing term.

For example, those people living in the cities would be called 'kuo-jen'; those living in the countryside would be called 'yeh jen'; the aristocracy was called 'ta jen' only denoted the slave-owning aristocracy, the 'yeh jen' must be the barbarian aristocracy ... this is not possible.⁴⁵

In answer to this, Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih stated that there had in fact been "barbarian aristocrats" in the sense that there were slave owners who live in the countryside.⁴⁶ Judging by his later articles, their argument seems to have had little effect on Feng's views.

A number of other articles also appeared to counter the ideas put forward by Kuan and Lin. Ch'ao Sung-t'ing wrote

44. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu kuan-yü jen te ssu-hsiang"
論孔子關於"仁"的思想 (On Confucius' Ideas of jen),
KTCHTLC, pp. 288-289.

45. Ibid.

46. Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, "Tsai lun K'ung-tzu" 再論孔子
(Further Discussion of Confucius), KTCHTLC, p. 320.

"An Argument against Comrades Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih's 'Further Discussion on Confucius'". He contended that Confucius had been indebted to the Chi family, quoting Szu-ma Chien that

growing up and working as a keeper of the granaries for the Chi family he measured the grain fairly, when he was keeper of the livestock the animals flourished; and so he was made minister of works.⁴⁷

Since Confucius had begun his official life by working with the Chi family, Ch'ao argued that it was unlikely that Confucius would in fact have opposed them.⁴⁸

T'ang I-chieh also referred to the issue of Kung-shan Fu-jao's rebellion to argue that although Confucius had originally been a member of the slave owning class, he had worked on behalf of the newly arising landlord class. T'ang reasoned that Confucius had become progressive because of his ambitious nature, illustrated by his statement "if anyone will employ me, may I not make an eastern Chou."⁴⁹ T'ang believed that when Confucius had seen that the slave-owning class was collapsing, he had aligned himself with the landlord class, then rising in power.

47. The translation used here comes from Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang, Records of the Historian, Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 1974, p. 2.

48. Ch'ao Sung-t'ing 昶松亭, "Tui-yü Kuan Feng, Lin Yü-shih erh t'ung-chih tsai-lun K'ung-tzu te shang-ch'ueh" 對於閻鋒林 昶松亭同志《再論孔子》的商榷 (Comments on Comrades Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih's 'A Further Discussion on Confucius'), KTCHTLC, p. 456.

49. T'ang I-chieh 湯一介, "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang tsai ch'un-chiu mo-chi te tso-yung" 孔子思想在春秋末期的作用 (The Function of Confucius' Thinking at the End of the Spring and Autumn Period), KTCHTLC, p. 54.

Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih had argued that Confucius had opposed the inscription of the penal code onto bronze tripods because he had wanted to oppress the slaves. Chung Chao-p'eng, who also saw Confucius as a member of the slave-owning class, but a progressive one, argued for the opposite view and said that Confucius had been against the inscription of the legal codes because they had actually been very oppressive. He saw Confucius wanting to use virtue instead of laws to rule as showing that he was sympathetic to the slave class.⁵⁰

Some other historians in the early sixties who followed Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation scheme in seeing the age Confucius lived in as one characterised by the decline of slave-ownership did not place him personally in the slave-owning class. Wang Hsien-chin stated that Confucius had belong to the landlord class, referring to the example of Confucius wanting to aid Kung-shan Fu-jao to argue that Confucius had been against the slave-owners.⁵¹

A number of other historians at the time, however, disagreed completely with Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation and adopted Fan Wen-lan's

50. Chung Chao-p'eng 鍾肇鵬, "Lieh lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang te chieh-chi hsing" 略論孔子思想的階級性 (A Brief Discussion on the Class Nature of Confucius' Thinking), KTCHTLC, pp. 182-196.

51. Wang Hsien-chin 王先謙, "K'ung-tzu tsai chung-kuo li-shih-shang te ti-wei" 孔子在中國歷史上的地位 (The Place of Confucius in Chinese History), KTCHTLC, pp. 111-112.

position. They led them to place Confucius in the feudal class. Ch'e Tsai, for instance, claimed that Confucius' morality had served the landlords rather than slave-owners.⁵²

Still other historians, like T'ang Lan, rejected both Kuo Mo-jo's and Fan Wen-lan's periodisations and created their own. T'ang Lan placed the dividing line between the slave and feudal periods at 720 B.C., that is, at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period. He saw Confucius as having belonged to the progressive wing of the gentry class who wanted to work for the good of the common man.⁵³

From the brief description of the different views expressed in the early sixties on Confucius' class membership and class stand, it can be seen that while the main arguments had already been voiced in the fifties and many of the prominent debaters such as Feng Yu-lan and Chao Chi-pin had participated in the earlier debates, there were still some significant differences. The quality of argumentation was on the whole more detailed and scholarly. The mastery of Marxist analysis by the majority of the writers was greater, even though it might involve little more than a mastery of terminology.

52. Ch'e Tsai 車載, "K'ung-tzu lun jen" 孔子論仁 (Confucius on jen), KTCHTLC, pp. 135-146.

53. T'ang Lan 唐蘭, "P'ing-lun K'ung-tzu shou-hsien ying-kai pien-ming K'ung-tzu so-ch'ü te shih shen-mo-yang hsing-chih te she-hui" 評論孔子首先應該弄明孔子所處的是什麼樣性質的社會 (To Evaluate Confucius, It is First Necessary to Clearly Understand the Nature of the Society He Lived in), KTCHTLC, pp. 341-353.

There were also some new but important participants in the debates, notably Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih. These scholars belonged to a younger generation trained largely under communism, and often with close party affiliations. Their research was thorough and their criticism of people like Feng Yu-lan sharp.

However, it could also be seen that the general trend definitely favoured a positive evaluation of Confucius' class background and class contributions, although it was generally admitted that Confucius' teachings in so far as they reflected his class standpoint, were not suitable to the present day.

The stand generally adopted on periodisation, coupled with the concept of historicism, enabled Confucius to be evaluated as having been progressive in his time, despite the fact that his ideas were of course feudal. He was generally seen as having been a member of the slave-owning class, but of having tried to introduce new ideas which worked for the good of the newly arising landlord class; in itself a more progressive step than supporting the slave-owners. By 1962, Liu Chieh and Feng Yu-lan had even suggested that since Confucius had aligned himself with a progressive class, the abstract essence of the values he proposed could be inherited, even in socialist times.

In September 1962, Mao Tse-tung referred to the need to continue class struggle arguing that

From now on, we must talk about this every year, every month, every day. We will talk about it at congresses, at Party delegate meetings, at plenums, at every meeting we hold.⁵⁴

The new emphasis on class was reflected in attacks made on Feng Yu-lan and Liu Chieh, who were both accused of not adopting a proper class stance.

By August 1963, Liu Chieh was accused of having argued that

Confucius was the saviour for all times, and was the embodiment of the truth and the divine. With Confucius' concept of jen, all problems in the world can be solved. Things such as Marxism-Leninism, the theory of class struggle and the method of class analysis can be dispensed with.⁵⁵

By 1964, very little mention was being made of Confucius. More and more articles began to appear stressing the importance of class analysis and the debates in the philosophical field turned to the controversy raised by Yang Hsien-chen. Correspondingly, in the field of history, questions were raised about whether class compromise was possible, illustrated in the arguments about whether there really had been good officials who had made compromises with the peasants. These controversies were to lead up to the Cultural Revolution.

54. Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee", Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974, p. 190.

55. Li K'an 李侃, "Po hsin tsun-K'ung lun" 駁新尊孔論 (Repudiating a new theory of Confucius worship), KMJF, 17 and 18 August 1963, 17 August 1963, p. 2.

Confucius and Ethics

The question of whether to classify Confucius as a materialist or idealist continued as a topic of debate in the early sixties. If it could be shown that Confucius was a materialist, this would of course mean that he would be more positively evaluated in Marxist terms.⁵⁶

As evidence to claim that he was something of a materialist, it was often argued that he had added an agnostic element to the old rites. While he had placed stress on the observance of funeral and sacrificial rites, his statement "when you can't serve men, how can you serve ghosts?" was taken to express his doubts on the existence of ghosts.⁵⁷ Another saying that was often quoted was "does heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses and all things are continually being reproduced, but does heaven say anything?" This was said to have shown that Confucius had adopted a pantheistic outlook, laying the foundation in early philosophy for the development of materialist and atheistic strands of thought.⁵⁸ Examining some of the same quotes, Jen Chi-yü argued against the idea that Confucius had been materialist, writing that

56. The terms "idealist" and "materialist" have been used as evaluative terms as well as philosophical terms in many articles.

57. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu", KTCHTLC, p. 85.

58. T'ang I-chieh, "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang tsai ch'un-chiu mo-chi te tso-yung", ibid., p. 56.

although some comrades believe that these quotes show the beginnings of atheism, in reality Confucius openly admitted the existence of ghosts. His statement 'for a man to sacrifice to a spirit not belonging to him is flattery' ("wei-cheng", Analects) shows that he only opposed sacrificing randomly.⁵⁹

Jen Chi-yü concluded that Confucius had been an idealist.

However, there was no definite consensus reached about whether Confucius had been either idealist or materialist. Many considered that since he had lived in a period when materialist thought was emerging from an idealist mould, his thought contained elements of both.

Although there was more discussion on the question of Confucius' metaphysics than there had been in the fifties, the central question under consideration still remained that of his ethical outlook. Besides the problem of the meaning of such terms as jen, two issues were particularly raised: whether Confucius ethical outlook could still be inherited, and whether it was really necessary to use class analysis as a tool to analyse his ethical concepts.

Although Feng Yu-lan and Lin Chieh-jen were criticised in 1960 for not using class analysis in the evaluation of Confucian ethics, this brief period of attack did not deter them. Feng Yu-lan continued to interpret jen as "loving all men", despite rejoinders from his critics who argued that there

59. Jen Chi-yü, "K'ung-tzu ch'eng-chih-shang te po-shou li-ch'ang ho che-hsüeh shang te wei-hsin chu-i", ibid., p. 157.

could be no love that transcended class. In reply, Feng quoted an extract from Mao Tse-tung:

as for the so-called love of humanity, there has been no such all-inclusive love since humanity was divided into classes. All the ruling classes of the past were fond of advocating it, and so were many so-called sages and wise men, but nobody has ever really practised it because it is impossible in class society.⁶⁰

This quote has usually been used to show that class-transcending love was impossible. Feng, however, skilfully used it to argue instead that while it had never been "practised", this didn't mean that it was impossible to advocate class-transcending love as an abstract concept, or that class-transcending love could not exist. With this kind of argument, Feng continued to claim that when Confucius talked about loving men he had meant a love that was above class.⁶¹

In contending that Confucius had preached progressive ethical principles, Feng took into account the possibility that the ruling class could invent fine sounding phrases to deceive the people. He argued, however, that when a class was in the formative stage, the universal characteristics of its thought were not wholly false, whereas it could be said that when a class was on the decline, its thinking was on the whole deceptive.

60. Mao Tse-tung, "Yenan Forum On Literature and Art", in Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 3, pp. 69-98, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967, p. 91.

61. Feng Yu-lan, "Tsai lun K'ung-tzu kuan-yü jen te ssu-hsiang" 論孔子關於"仁"的思想 (A Further Discussion on Confucius' Thinking Concerning jen), KTCHTLC, p. 472.

He referred to the slogan of "liberty, equality, and fraternity", claiming that when the bourgeois class first used it to combat the feudal classes they were not wholly deceptive, whereas in contemporary times it was a deceptive slogan.⁶² Since Feng had believed that Confucius belonged to the newly arisen feudal class, he could on this basis go on to argue that Confucius had proposed his ethical principles with some sincerity.

Feng Yu-lan's arguments had the effect of diluting class analysis to allow room for more traditional interpretations. Liu Chieh was to go even further when he argued that a class analysis of ethics was not necessary and that in some instances class analysis was not even appropriate.⁶³ This kind of reasoning was made possible by a clever use of the historicist argument tied in with the application of periodisation, so that each historical figure would be judged in terms of his historical period, and not by contemporary standards.

On the whole, these themes had already been hinted at in the fifties. The difference in the sixties was that those who argued for Confucian ethics were utilizing Marxist terminology

62. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu kuan-yü jen te ssu-hsiang", KTCHTLC, p. 292. Feng had quoted from the German Ideology to back up this statement.

63. Liu Chieh's articles appeared in Hsüeh-shu yen-chiu 學術研究 (Academic Research), 1962, No. 1, 1963, Nos. 2 and 3. These articles, however, are not available and I have been unable to look at them. The essential points that he made can be gleaned from reports of conferences held during 1961 and 1962 in such academic journals as Historical Research and Philosophical Research and in repudiations of his ideas, such as Li K'an's "Po hsin tsun-K'ung lun".

much more, even though they then might "prove" something quite contrary to Marxist premises. This was clearly illustrated by Feng Yu-lan quoting Marx and Mao on the importance of class love to prove that class-transcending love was possible.

In the general atmosphere of praise of Confucius in the early sixties, it is not surprising that many writers supported Feng's viewpoint on jen. Chung Chao-p'eng also based his argument on the definition of jen as "love men". Chung argued that by saying jen was to love men Confucius had been advocating the liberation of slaves. He also reasoned that when Confucius said he wanted to return to the rites, he made sure that these rites had contained the notion of loving all men. Since in the old Chou rites, common men had been excluded, Chung came to the conclusion that Confucius had discovered humanity in all men; a similar thesis to that put forward by Kuo Mo-jo some fifteen years earlier.⁶⁴

An Tso-chang was another writer who held the view that jen meant loving man. He repeated the commonly held theory that since Confucius had said that jen was to love men, he had instilled a new notion of men into the old Chou rites. Consequently Confucius' thinking was on the whole progressive, and when he mentioned returning to the rites, he had been talking of quite a different thing to the old Chou rites.⁶⁵

64. Chung Chao-p'eng, "Lüeh lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang te chieh-chi hsing", p. 189.

65. An Tso-chang 安作強, "Kuan-yü K'ung-tzu 'li' ho 'jen' te hstieh-shuo" 關於孔子的"禮"和"仁"的學說 (On Confucius' doctrines of li and jen), KTCHTL, pp. 96-101.

Although evaluations of Confucius concentrated mainly on the concept of jen, attempts were also made to suggest that Confucian ethics contained some elements similar to socialism. His advocacy of "ta t'ung" (the great commonwealth) and abolition of private property were quoted.⁶⁶ While these arguments reinforced the view that Confucian ethics were inheritable, they tended nevertheless to have been peripheral.

Those who were pro-Confucius in their analysis of his ethical contributions skilfully used the technique of class analysis and periodisation to exonerate Confucius for principles that seemed to be more indefensible. While it might be claimed that jen was a progressive element that Confucius had instilled into the concept of li, there was still the question of why Confucius had retained the reactionary concept of li. T'ang I-chieh asked:

Then why did Confucius not eschew li? Why did Confucius not simply add some unimportant content to it? This was because Confucius lived in a transition period between a slave and feudal society. He represented the interests of a section of the slave-owning aristocracy which was then being transformed into a feudal aristocracy. Therefore he had on the one hand to preserve some things from the old system while on the other hand he had to reform important elements of the old system to adapt it to the needs of new relationships which existed in the mode of production.⁶⁷

66. Jen Chuan 任端, "K'ung-tzu 'li-yün' ta-t'ung ssu-hsiang" 孔子禮運大同思想 (The Idea of the Great Commonwealth in Confucius' 'Evolution of the Rites'), KMJP, 12 May 1961.

67. T'ang I-chieh, "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang tsai ch'un-chiu mo-chi te tso-yung", pp. 69-70.

This quote sums up the opinion of those who wrote favourably on Confucius' ethics.

The arguments presented by those writers who were critical of Confucius were generally more detailed than the ones put forward in the fifties. Those who took a positive view of Confucian ethics had generally taken the definition of jen as "love men". This was given a different interpretation by critics of Confucius who also often referred to Confucius' other statement of jen as "k'o-chi fu-li" (restraining oneself and returning to the rites).

In the fifties, Chao Chi-pin had already interpreted the "men" of "love men" as denoting the class of slave-owners. This interpretation had generally been ignored by those who extolled Confucius. In 1962, Chao wrote an article on the definition of jen as "restraining oneself and returning to the rites". He claimed that Feng Yu-lan's interpretation of "restraining oneself and returning to the rites" as meaning cultivating oneself and returning to idealised ways of behaving was based on later views put forward by such neo-Confucians as the Ch'eng brothers and Chu Hsi, rather than on the sayings of Confucius himself.⁶⁸ He also argued against this interpretation on the grounds that it took the meaning of the words at face

68. Chao Chi-pin 趙紀彬, "Jen li chieh-ku" 仁禮解故 (The Original Meanings of jen and li explained), in idem, Lun-yü hsin-t'an, Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1962, p. 179.

value. Analysing each character of "K'o-chi fu-li" etymologically, he concluded that by jen Confucius had meant that one should personally observe and perform the old Chou rites. This had been a retrogressive proposal, since his main purpose had been to try to reconcile the internal contradictions amongst the jen (slave-owning) class.⁶⁹

Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih agreed with the overall assessment made by Chao Chi-pin, but they arrived at their conclusion by different methods. While Chao relied on a semantic analysis, Kuan and Lin used historical examples. They argued that the time Confucius lived in was one where the slave system was on the decline. For example, it was shown that local authorities had usurped the power of the central authorities, that is, of the Chou court, which had not been the case when Chou was still stable and strong. As well, most of the local lords did not attend court and did not pay homage to the Chou prince. Furthermore, many of them called themselves rulers in defiance of the central authorities. Also, officials murdered rulers, sons were said to have had their fathers killed and brothers were also slaying each other.

According to Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, since Confucius had represented the class which was crumbling, these factors were the reasons why Confucius wanted to restore the old Chou rites. He had attempted to do this by defining jen as returning

69. Ibid., p. 200.

to the Chou rites and proposing that jen was the highest ideal for men to follow. All the other measures that Confucius advocated, such as the rectification of names and the opposition to inscribing legal codes on bronze tripods, were also directed to this end.⁷⁰

Chao Chi-pin, Kuan and Lin thus all agreed that Confucius had wanted to use jen as a way of restoring old rites. Despite this all three writers admitted that Confucius was to a certain extent progressive for his time. Kuan and Lin, for example, said that in using jen, Confucius had brought the rites, which had been reserved for the aristocracy, down to the common people and thus could be said to have discovered "man".⁷¹ Instead of claiming that Confucius was a reactionary, they concluded that Confucius' ethics was reformist.

Although these critics had made certain concessions, Feng Yu-lan nevertheless attacked them for saying that Confucius was mainly backward-looking in his outlook.⁷² It has already been pointed out earlier that Feng had used class analysis to advocate universal concepts which were timeless and class-transcending.

70. Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, "Lun K'ung-tzu", pp. 218-219.

71. Ibid., p. 226.

72. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu kuan-yü jen te ssu-hsiang", pp. 287-290.

Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih carried out a long debate on this issue with Feng. Kuan and Lin insisted in their later articles that it was not correct to take ethical terms out of their historical context.⁷³ Using historicism to their advantage they wanted to make an analysis of the class composition of the time of Confucius in order to determine what he meant by love, forgiveness, and so on. This debate did not reach a satisfactory conclusion until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, when the methods employed by Feng were heavily criticised.

Yang Jung-kuo, who was to become the most important critic of Confucius in the seventies, reiterated his views that Confucius had tried to use his ethical concepts as a way to perpetuate the rule of the slave-owning class. Yang had not basically changed his position since the forties. He was more critical of Confucius than Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih. His 1962 article, however, did not meet with much discussion, indicating that at that stage, his views were not as important as some of the others. It should also be pointed out that even for a consistently anti-Confucius writer such as Yang, as a token to the general pro-Confucius atmosphere of the time, he had to acknowledge that Confucius had made positive contributions in his time, especially in the field of education.⁷⁴

73. See Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, "Tsai lun K'ung-tzu" and "San lun K'ung-tzu" 三論孔子 (A Third Discussion on Confucius), KTCHTLC, pp. 401-411.

74. Yang Jung-kuo 楊榮國, "Lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsing" (On Confucius' Ideas), KTCHTLC, pp. 373-400.

Although it could be said that Yang Jung-kuo had been more thorough than Kuan, Lin, and Chao in his criticisms of Confucius, the writings of the latter tended to be researched in more depth and more carefully argued. More importantly, Kuan, Lin, and Chao had explicitly outlined the restorationist theme in the writings of Confucius, particularly in their analysis of jen as a means of restoring old rites and old values. The restorationist theme was to become one of the most important academic issues in the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath. This issue essentially emerged out of the debates during the early sixties on Confucian ethics, although it had been hinted at before.

In 1963 prominent leftwing theoreticians such as Kuan Feng, Lin Chieh and T'ang I-chieh wrote articles disagreeing with Feng's views on the "form of universality." In 1961 Feng Yu-lan had quoted the following passage from Marx and Engels to justify his idea of a universal form:

For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. The class making a revolution appears from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society; it appears as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class.⁷⁵

75. This translation comes from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, p. 48.

Feng used this as a basis to argue that the concept of jen was universally valid, and had not simply been put forward by the newly arisen feudal class to deceive the people.⁷⁶ Feng's concept was in fact similar to the idea of "abstract values" which he had put forward during the Hundred Flowers period in the fifties, except that this time he had put his views in a Marxist form.

Feng K'o-li quoted a different passage from The German Ideology arguing that Feng Yu-lan had misinterpreted Marx. Feng had left out

If now in considering the course of history we detach the ideas of the ruling class from the ruling class itself and attribute to them an independent existence... if we thus ignore the individuals and world conditions which are the sources of the ideas, we can say, for instance, that during the time that the aristocracy was dominant, the concepts honour, loyalty, etc., were dominant, during the dominance of the bourgeoisie the concepts freedom, equality, etc. The ruling class on the whole imagines this to be so.⁷⁷

The addition of this introductory paragraph to the passage Feng quoted gives a completely different meaning to it.

Feng, along with other historians like Li Ching-ch'un and Liu Chieh, were accused of having tried to make the ancients

76. Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu kuan-yü jen te ssu-hsiang".

77. Translation from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 48. Fang K'e-li 方克己, "Kuan-yü K'ung-tzu 'jen' te yen-chiu chung te i-ko fang-fa-lun wen-t'i" 關於孔子"仁"的研究中的一些方法問題 (On the Problem of Methodology in the Study of Confucius' Theory of jen), CHYC, 1963, No. 4, p. 25.

seem modern, so that they would be pictured as being nearly Marxist.⁷⁸ Throughout 1963 attacks were launched on "people who tried to make feudal ethics inheritable."⁷⁹ Feng's equation of modern bourgeois ideas like equality with jen was also attacked on the grounds that these concepts, belonging to different periods and derived from different periods and different economic backgrounds could not be equivalent. The issue revolved around the question of whether what a historical figure had said could be separated from his actual, concrete self, "whether a person could be reactionary yet his words progressive." This question was relevant to an evaluation of Confucius: if Confucius was agreed to have been a representative of the slave-owning class, then his writings would also have to be regarded as reactionary.

Although Feng Yu-lan continued to defend his position until the second half of 1963,⁸⁰ generally a more careful use

78. Tung Fang-ming 東方明, "Che-hsüeh-shih kung-tso chung te i-chung chi-yu-hai te fang-fa" 哲學史工作中的一種極有害的方法 (An Extremely Harmful Method in the Work of the History of Philosophy), CHYC, 1963, No. 1, p. 33.

79. For example, Ai Chen 艾真, "Kuan-yü tao-te wen-t'i te chi-tien chih-i" 關於道德問題的幾點質疑 (A Few Queries on the Question of Morality), CHYC, 1963, No. 5, pp. 44-46 and p. 43. Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, "Kuan-yü che-hsüeh-shih, yen-chiu chung chieh-chi fen-hsi te chi-ko wen-t'i" 關於哲學史研究中階級分析的幾個問題 (A Few Questions on Class Analysis in the Research of the History of Philosophy), CHYC, 1963, No. 6, pp. 29-44.

80. See Feng Yu-lan, "Fang K'e-li t'ung-chih ho wo-te fen-ch'i" 方克立同志和我的分歧 (The Divergence Between Comrade Fang K'e-li and I), CHYC, 1963, No. 5, pp. 57-60.

of Marxist analysis was being demanded. In late 1963, Feng had made a self-criticism,⁸¹ and in 1964 he published a new edition of his A New Edition of the History of Chinese Philosophy in which he revised the section on jen in accordance with these debates.⁸²

Confucius and Education

The early sixties saw a revival of interest in Confucian ideas on education. Chan Wing-tsit lists eighteen articles written specifically on Confucian education between 1949 and 1963, over three-quarters of which were written in 1961 and 1962.⁸³ Besides these articles dealing exclusively with Confucius' educational theories, his contributions to education were frequently mentioned in general evaluations.⁸⁴

81. Feng Yu-lan, "Kuan-yi K'ung-tzu t'ao-lun te p'i-p'ing yü tzu-wo p'i-p'ing" 關於孔子討論的批評與自我批評 (On Criticisms of Discussions on Confucius and a Self-criticism), CHYC, 1963, No. 6, pp. 45-53.

82. Feng Yu-lan, Chung-kuo che-hsüeh-shih hsin-p'ien 中國哲學史新編 (A New Edition of the History of Chinese Philosophy) revised edn., Vol. 1, Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1964, see appendix, p. 607.

83. Chan Wing-tsit, Chinese Philosophy, 1949-1963, pp. 107-110.

84. In nearly all the articles and books written on him, a special section was reserved for discussing his educational innovations. In a poem prefacing his New Edition of the History of Chinese Philosophy, Feng Yu-lan compared Mao with Confucius and himself with Yen Hui, the favourite student of Confucius.

This revival of interest in Confucius' ideas on education did not remain simply a matter of academic interest. Increasingly, Confucius' ideas were being referred to in general discussions of education. This should be understood against the background of educational policy at the time. In the early fifties the Soviet model had been the source of inspiration for educational theories. In the late fifties this was replaced by the Yen-an model, with its stress on popularisation and adapting education to the needs of local conditions. However, by the early sixties, both models had been discredited: the Soviet model after links had been broken with the Soviet Union, and the Yen-an model by its association with the Great Leap Forward. It is not surprising, then, that educators began to turn to traditional ideas as a guide.

Traditional thinking with its emphasis on different study also fitted in with current needs and policies. The Soviet withdrawal of technicians and experts in 1960 made even more urgent China's need for highly trained scientific personnel. By 1961, China had turned to a policy which placed more stress on "expertness" and the learning of specialised skills. The change in policy was announced by Ch'en I in August 1961 in a speech which called for a more academic education, in which specialised schools would give less attention to politics and manual labour. Politics would largely be left to political schools. Students and intellectuals, Ch'en stated, could not

necessarily be expected to have deep-rooted Marxist convictions. He pointed to his own mind which he said still contained the ideas of Confucius and Mencius. Students were given encouragement not just to study, but to study in the manner of the ancients. Ch'en wrote:

To study a specialised subject, one should study it with concentration and absorption, even to the seemingly foolish extent of forgetting to eat and sleep. One should take an interest in one's specialised subject and be totally involved in it for ten years, eight years, or even the whole of one's life. Only then can one make some achievements. All great ancient scholars had this spirit of devotion. Confucius 'read so hard that he forgot to eat', Tung Chung-shu 'did not look at the garden for three whole years', Boddhidharma 'faced a wall for nine years.' We should learn from their spirit in searching for knowledge.⁸⁵

Ch'en I's reference to Confucian tradition as a model of scholarship was by no means isolated. Ku Wei-chin also referred approvingly to Confucius having studied so hard that he forgot to eat. He quoted the first line of the Analects "study and practice often" as still being an appropriate principle in learning. If a person practised often, he would have a great store of knowledge, but if what is learnt was not revised constantly it would be forgotten. Ku argued that through revision a student could come to understand the new, mentioning as an example that through studying Mao repeatedly one could gain new perceptions and ideas. He also believed that all

85. Ch'en I 陳毅, "Tui Pei-ching-shih kao-teng ylian-hsiao ying-chieh pi-yeh sheng te chiang-hua", p. 3.

real scholars should learn from Confucius' attitude of humility in his

when you know a thing, to hold that you know it; and when you do not know a thing, to allow that you do not know it; this is knowledge.⁸⁶

In 1964 Wu T'ien-shih and Ma Ying-po produced a book written in a similar vein. Entitled On the Spirit and Method of Learning of Our Country's Ancient Scholars, it was intended as a guide for young students. Stories from the Analects, as well as other classical texts, were used to illustrate the attitude of Confucius and other ancient scholars towards study.⁸⁷

Traditionally Confucius had been regarded as the first person to have made teaching into a profession, earning him the title of "paragon of teachers". In the early sixties this was regarded as perhaps the greatest contribution that Confucius had made to Chinese culture. Confucius was also believed to have been the first to popularize education. Chung Chao-p'eng argued that since Confucius had had some three thousand students, this was proof that he had tried to spread education on a wide scale. In addition, he quoted Confucius' "in teaching there is no distinction of classes" and "I have never refused instruction to anyone who brings anything more than a bundle of dried meat

86. Translation from Legge, p. 19.

87. Wu T'ien-shih, Ma Ying-po, T'an-t'an wo-kuo ku-tai hsieh-che te hsieh-hsi ching-sheng ho hsieh-hsi fang-fa.

to me"⁸⁸ to show that Confucius had been willing to teach the common man, an innovation in the period in which he was living.⁸⁹

Wang Hsien-chin also argued that Confucius' educational endeavours had been in the service of the newly-arisen landlord class, and that all of his students, except one, had been commoners. Yen Hui, his favourite student, had come from a poor family, and Tsu Lu, another of favoured student, was from a barbarian group.⁹⁰ T'ang I-chieh believed that Confucius had advocated teaching without distinction of classes, reasoning that Confucius had done this because of the unstable social situation in the Spring and Autumn period. By advocating "in teaching there is no distinction of classes", Confucius had solved the urgent task of finding talents who could solve the urgent problems of the time. Looking at the students whom he nurtured, T'ang argued that they indeed included talents of many kinds, many of whom had helped in the establishment of feudal society. By putting an end to official education and beginning private teaching, Confucius had made an important contribution to the progress of society in his time.⁹¹

88. These quotes come from the Confucian Analects.

89. Chung Chao-p'eng, "Lüeh-lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang te chieh-chi hsing", p. 193.

90. Wang Hsien-chin, "K'ung-tzu tsai chung-kuo li-shih shang te ti-wei", p. 128.

91. T'ang I-chieh, "K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang tsai ch'un-chiu mo-ch'i te tso-yung", p. 75.

Confucius' teaching methods were also praised as progressive. Wang Hsien-chin, for instance, listed as the outstanding qualities of Confucius' teaching method that he had developed his teaching in accordance with the level of the students knowledge, and that in teaching, he had taught untiringly. He also praised Confucius for compiling such texts as The Book of History and the Spring and Autumn Annals.⁹²

One area in which traditional Confucian ideas began to have an influence again concerned the question of teacher-student relationships. There were many signs of a return to Confucian tradition: veteran teachers were put in charge of major courses, and younger teachers and students were encouraged to respect them. K'uang Ya-ming, the party secretary of Nanking University, suggested that modern educators could learn from the spirit of ancient education:

the ancients thus regarded respect for the teacher as an indication of love for studies and attention for knowledge. For his part the teacher should "learn without ever feeling tired learning and teach without ever feeling tired of teaching", love his pupils and set higher standards for them. Confucius said, "if you love somebody, will you not work hard for him? If you are loyal to somebody, will you not advise him?" (Hsien Wen, the Analects). To be sure, the teacher-student relationship in the class society like any other kind of relationship between one man and another there bears class impressions. But it has also left behind many useful and reasonable things for us.⁹³

92. Wang Hsien-chin, ibid., pp. 128-129.

93. K'uang Ya-ming 匡亚明, "Lüeh-lun shih-sheng kuan-hsi", 教师与学生关系 (A Brief Discussion on the Teacher-student Relationship), HC, 1961, No. 17, p. 25.

Some of the writers who argued in favour of Confucian education tried to find parallels between Confucius' ideas and the ideas then prevailing in China despite the fact that in a number of ways traditional education would seem to be opposed to Marxist ideas on education. A distinction can be made, of course, between the ideas that Confucius had taught, and the way in which these ideas had been transformed over the centuries. This was done in a number of articles which sought to show that while traditional education as it was practised in the Ch'ing period indeed had many failings, this represented a degeneration of Confucius' ideas, which had been quite different.

One of the ways in which modern educational practice differed from traditional practices was in the inclusion of physical education as an important part of the curriculum. This had come about largely because of western influences and at times faced intense opposition, as Chu Teh, who attended a college for physical education teachers, testified.⁹⁴

Hsin Lan, who frequently wrote for the journal New Sports, argued that Confucius had encouraged an interest in physical culture, but that in later dynasties, the feudal class had distorted Confucius' ideas by stressing only literary education and ignoring physical culture. The argument that Confucius had been interested in sport rested on two main

94. Agnes Smedley, The Great Road: the Life and Times of Chu Teh, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1956.

claims. It was argued that Confucius himself had paid attention to physical health. He had not been built at all like the stereotype of a classical scholar. Traditional descriptions suggested that he was very tall and strong. He had liked to go walking in the countryside, to go fishing, hunting, and had been good at archery and charioteering. His refusal to use a net instead of a line when fishing, and his refusal to shoot birds in their nests were cited to show his good sportsmanship. Confucius had also stressed the importance of a well regulated life, with proper hygiene, eating and sleeping habits and posture. Since he had lived till the ripe old age of 73, this was further proof of his physical fitness.⁹⁵

The second claim lay in Confucius' inclusion of archery and charioteering amongst the six arts that he taught. These were also military activities, but it was argued that they could also be regarded as sports. Like other sports, they also developed the body and harmonized movements. Like sport, archery and charioteering could also be competitive, and archery competitions had been organised in the past. A sport could also fulfill the function of military training while still being a sport, parachuting being cited as a modern

95. Hsin Lan 辛蘭, "K'ung-tzu tsai t'i-yü fang-mien te shih-chien ho chu-chang" 孔子在體育方面的實踐和主張 (Confucius' Actual Practice and Proposals in the Field of Sport), Hsin t'i-yü 新體育 (New Sports), 1962, No. 8, pp. 13-16.

example. Like other sports, archery and charioteering could also help build one's character.⁹⁶

In keeping with the general nationalist sentiments of the time, Hsin Lan called for more research to be done on ancient Chinese ideas on sport. In recent times, he argued, when physical education is talked of, we know about Greece and the Olympics, and about sport in Europe, as if only western capitalist countries had sport. We should also look at our own history and our own tradition. While Confucian ideas on sport had been distorted by many later writers, he cited several historical figures such as Tung Chung-shu and Ou-yang Hsiu who had related Confucius to physical education. These people, he claimed, represented the true stream of Confucius' thought in physical education.⁹⁷

A second area in which educators tried to show that Confucius had advocated similar ideas to those held in contemporary times the issue of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment as a method of discipline had been abolished after the Communists came to power. Li Yin-nung attempted to prove that Confucius himself had been opposed to corporal punishment. He based his argument on the story of one of Confucius' students,

96. Chang Tao-yang 張道揚, "Ts'ung she yü lun-cheng K'ung-tzu t'i-yü ssu-hsiang" 從射御論記孔子作育思想 (Confucius' Ideas of Sports Discussed and Proved from Archery and Charioteering), *KMJP*, 27 March 1962, p. 2.

97. Hsin Lan, *ibid.*, p. 16.

Tseng Ts'an, whose father had beaten him so severely that he lost consciousness. Tseng Ts'an had accepted the beating in the belief that his body belonged to his parents. When he regained consciousness he had begun singing to make his father feel at ease. Confucius had, however, criticised his behaviour, and refused to see him, saying that his body also belonged to the emperor and that he should not have allowed his father to transgress his obligations. Li Yin-nung argued that this proved that Confucius had been opposed to corporal punishment.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most important area in which Confucian education seemed to differ from Marxist theories of education was over the question of productive labour. Mao himself had pointed out that

Confucius never reclaimed land or tilled the soil ... When a student asked him how to plough the fields, Confucius answered, 'I don't know, I am not as good at that as a farmer'. Confucius was next asked how to grow vegetables, and he answered, 'I don't know, I am not as good at that as a vegetable gardener.' In ancient times the youth of China who studied under a sage neither learned revolutionary theory nor took part in labour.⁹⁹

Despite this, Li Yin-nung tried to show that Confucius had not looked down on manual labour. He argued that Confucius had praised those who loved manual labour and worked for the

98. Li Yin-nung 李蔭農, "K'ung-fu-tzu pu tsan-ch'eng t'i-fa" (Confucius did not approve of Corporal Punishment), Yang-ch'eng Wan-pao 羊城晚報 (Canton Evening News), 11 September 1962.

99. Mao Tse-tung, "The Orientation of the Youth Movement", Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 2, p. 248.

welfare of society. Li claimed that Confucius had praised Shun, the sage-emperor who used to plough the fields and fish, and made pottery because he had laboured for welfare of the people. Shun had used productive labour to civilise the people, and though taking part in productive labour himself had served as a model for the people to follow. Besides Confucius praising the early sages, there were later examples of him praising ordinary people for their love of manual labour. Confucius was said to have extolled of a particular woman who liked weaving as a form of manual labour, despite her husband's disapproval of her ways.¹⁰⁰

Li examined the question of why Confucius had disagreed with his students learning farming, contending that this was because he had been politically ambitious and had wanted to create a virtuous society. He had encouraged his students to develop their talents in such a way as to help him in his political goals. His disagreement with his students doing farming was not because he looked down on physical labour, but because he had high political aims.

Li argued it was wrong to criticise Confucius and his students for not wanting to engage in productive labour. They had been living in a period of rapid social change, when going into politics and educational and cultural activities was most

100. Li Yin-nung, "Lun K'ung-tzu tui lao-tung te t'ai-tu"
論孔子對勞動的態度 (On Confucius' Attitudes Towards Labour),
Yang-ch'eng wan-pao, 22 March 1962.

important. Those most concerned with society would have taken an interest in politics, only those with no concern for society would have failed to consider political questions. He referred to the three farmers who criticised Confucius for not participating in productive work.¹⁰¹ According to Li they had only managed to feed themselves, and there was nothing to be learned from them. In contrast, Confucius had left great contributions for later generations.¹⁰² Li's article resembled many others of the time, in that it gave a complimentary view of Confucius but ended by admitting some faults in him. "We can't deny", he wrote, "that Confucius had looked down slightly on manual labour and the labouring people, but this was due to his historical position and could be forgiven."

Praise of Confucius' ideas on education was so widespread and pervasive in the early sixties that even those who were otherwise critical of him tended to agree with the view that Confucius' contributions to education had been progressive.

Jen Chi-yü, who on the whole argued that Confucius had been reactionary, stated that this "does not take away the historical significance of Confucius. Being a great educator, historian, and learned scholar, Confucius occupies an extremely important place in ancient Chinese history. His teachings

101. These stories are from the Confucian Analects. See Legge, pp. 276-278.

102. Li Yin-nung, ibid.

made a positive contribution to the feudal culture and education of China."¹⁰³ Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, while pointing out there were inconsistencies in Confucius' ideas on education, considered that such statements had been progressive as "by nature men are nearly alike, by practice they get to grow apart."¹⁰⁴ These statements were said to have shown a materialist strain in his thought.¹⁰⁵ Even Yang Jung-kuo, the most consistent and vehement critic of Confucius who had in the forties and fifties criticised Confucius' ideas on education as another instrument of his reactionary politics, conceded in this time that Confucius had popularised education and that one could still learn from his attitude of "I never get tired of learning and I never get wearied of teaching."¹⁰⁶

In the early sixties, then, writers on Confucius were unanimous in their opinion that Confucius had been progressive in the field of education and had made positive contributions to the history of Chinese education.

103. Jen Chi-yü, "K'ung-tzu ch'eng-chih-shang te po-shou li-ch'ang ho che-hsüeh shang te wei-hsin chu-i", p. 159.

104. See Legge, p. 255.

105. Kuan Feng and Lin Yü-shih, "Lun K'ung-tzu", p. 250.

106. Yang Jung-kuo, "Lun K'ung-tzu ssu-hsiang", p. 395.

Concluding Remarks

Evaluations of Confucius in the early sixties continued trends which had become apparent in the fifties. The outburst of praise for Confucius during the Hundred Flowers period was interrupted by the anti-rightist movement and the Great Leap Forward. It reached new heights in the early sixties, when a torrent of articles eulogizing Confucius appeared. Interest in inheriting Confucian values during the Communist period was at its greatest in the early sixties, a fact which hardly justifies Levenson's claim that there was an attempt to "museumify" him.¹⁰⁷

While the evaluations of the early sixties can be seen as a continuation of the positive assessments of the fifties, the brief counter-attack made by the party during the anti-rightist movement had a visible effect on the writings that followed. The early sixties were characterised by two seemingly contradictory tendencies, both legacies from the debates during the first decade of the People's Republic.

One of the results of the bitter attacks made during the anti-rightist movement was that those writing again in the early sixties were more careful in their use of Marxist analysis. The concept of class was employed in a much more conscious and

107. Joseph R. Levenson, The Problem of Historical Significance, Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965, p. 82.

deliberate way than was the case in the fifties. This was apparent in the assessments of Confucius' class membership and class stand. Unlike the fifties when these concepts were analysed in a rather vague manner, the early sixties saw a much more precise placing of Confucius' class, and almost all writers acknowledged the importance of the question of periodisation. Even the few writers who queried whether ethical principles always had a class nature had to argue for their beliefs, and not simply ignore basic Marxist premises as many scholars in the fifties had done. This is not surprising considering that for over ten years, intellectuals were encouraged to reform their thinking in a series of successive campaigns. Furthermore, unlike the fifties when most writers were old scholars who had been publishing before 1949, the early sixties saw the emergence of a new breed of young intellectuals like Kuan Feng who had received an education under the new regime and who were to play leading roles in the Cultural Revolution.

The surprisingly thing is that coupled with this more intensive use of Marxist techniques, the content and conclusions of the debate were in general more favourable to Confucius than in the fifties. This was a result of the use of historicist arguments. By using this kind of argument which demanded that a historical figure should be judged by the standards and social make-up of the period he was living in,

Confucius could be excused as having been on the progressive wing of the exploiting class. The extent of praise for Confucius was most apparent in the assessments of his educational thinking. Unlike the fifties, and even thirties and forties when some people were critical of him, he was now universally acclaimed as having made major contributions in education and culture which could still be relevant in a socialist country.

This apparent contradiction between the methodological "Marxian dress" and the traditional content of much of the historical writings of the early sixties shows that tradition and communism were still considered to be compatible.¹⁰⁸ This was to be shattered by the Cultural Revolution.

Why did the evaluations of Confucius and tradition swing so drastically in such apparent extremes and such quick successions? The attempt to assert China's independence from Soviet influence led to two kinds of views. While many including the older intellectuals, looked towards the Chinese tradition for a basis for a new Chinese nationalism, others like Mao drew their inspirations more from Marxist writings and experiences such as that of Yenan.

The evaluations of Confucius in the Hundred Flowers in the fifties and early sixties can be seen as attempts to show that Chinese history was still glorious and that there were

108. Albert Feuerwerker, "China's History in Marxian Dress", in Albert Feuerwerker (ed.), History in Communist China, Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1968, Chapter 2.

indeed great sages in China's past. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution could be seen as endeavours by the more radical factions of the Chinese leadership including Mao to work out a Communist way which was particularly Chinese, and one which by its commitment to class struggle could point to the Soviet leaders as well as the more moderate people in China as being revisionists.

Seen in this light, the apparent swings in the evaluations of Confucius were not simply academic ones, but political as well. Even those who wanted to draw their inspirations from the past also acknowledged Marxism. This helps to explain the contradictions in the writings of the early sixties itself.

Chapter IV

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION PERIOD

Historical Setting

After Mao issued his call at the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee in September 1962 to "never forget class struggle", China began to show signs of increasing politicisation. A number of historians and other intellectuals came under attack for theories they had put forward in the previous few years. In the countryside, the socialist education movement was launched. Mao, who in the early sixties had remained to some extent in the background, now came to the fore again. However, many of the orders which he issued at this time were met by lip service instead of leading to the fundamental changes that he sought. By 1965 Mao decided to escalate the struggle.

Some of the opposition to Mao had been expressed in the form of historical allegory, a time-honoured Chinese tradition. On November 1965, Wen Hui Daily in Shanghai published an article criticising the play Hai Jui Dismissed From Office.¹ In this play, Wu Han had sought to criticise Mao for dismissing P'eng Teh-huai in 1959. The beginning of the Cultural Revolution can be dated from this article.

1. Yao Wen-yüan 姚文元, "P'ing hsin-p'ien li-shih chü 'Hai Jui pa kuan'" 評新編歷史劇《海瑞罷官》 (A Critique of the New Historical Play 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office'), Wen hui pao 文匯報, 10 November 1965.

Wu Han besides being an intellectual was also deputy-mayor of Peking. It was unlikely that he could have written in this way without higher approval. The fact that the article criticising him was published in Shanghai showed how little control Mao had in Peking at the time. He was later to complain

Wu Han has made public so many essays. They never had to be made known. They never had to be approved. So why do the essays of Yao Wen-yüan have to be made known?²

and that

Even a silver needle cannot penetrate into Peking, even a single drop of water cannot fall into Peking. P'eng Chen wants to transform the party according to his world outlook.³

At a talk in December 1965, Mao had acknowledged that "the crux of Hai Jui Dismissed From Office was the question of dismissal from office... P'eng Te-huai is Hai Jui."⁴ On 27 December the Peking Daily published Wu Han's self-criticism of the play, in which he explained his error in academic rather than political terms.⁵ This was the same line that was to be taken in a

2. Translation from Mao Tse-tung, "Down with the Prince of Hell, Liberate the Little Devil - A Talk with Such Comrades as K'ang Sheng", Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968) Part II. Arlington: Joint Publications Research Service, 1974, p. 382.

3. Mao Tse-tung, "Criticize P'eng Chen", ibid., p. 383.

4. Translation from Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at Hangchow", Stuart Schram (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974, p. 237.

5. Wu Han, "Kuan-yü 'Hai Jui pa kuan' te tzu-wo p'i-p'an" (關於海瑞罷官的自我批評) (A Self-criticism Relating to 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office'), JMJP, 30 December 1965.

report drawn up under the instructions of the central committee, and issued in February 1966. Although the committee responsible for writing the report consisted of a group of five, it was later alleged that P'eng Chen, mayor of Peking and thus Wu Han's superior, had written it by himself.

At this stage, the Cultural Revolution was still relatively inactive. At Peking University, several debates had been held concerned with the question of Wu Han. At a meeting on 1 April, Lu P'ing, the party secretary of the university, had chosen to view the question of Wu Han as an academic one. He explained that under his personal guidance some of the students and teachers of the department of law had looked through 1,500 books and read 14 million characters of material to study the question of Hai Jui, coming to the conclusion that Hai Jui's orientation and method had been correct.⁶ A week later the party committee presided over by Lu issued instructions to criticise Wu Han, but it was too late for them to avoid the coming attack. A group of teachers and students had already posted a wall poster asking why the Cultural Revolution had been suppressed within the university.

On 16 May, the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a report which, it was later revealed, had been largely

6. Feng Cheng, "Education in Communist China, 1966", Communist China 1966, Vol. II, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968, p. 46.

written by Mao.⁷ For the first time it brought out into the open the extent of intra-party struggle. It accused P'eng Chen's report of having covered up the serious political nature of the struggle, and criticised by name Wu Han, Chien Po-tsan and other intellectuals as well as those in charge of cultural affairs. Within the universities, student activity and criticism was curtailed for a time by the introduction of the work teams, sent in by the order of Liu Shao-ch'i. Liu's wife, Wang Kuang-mei joined the team at Tsinghua University. This period later became known amongst the students as the period of "white terror".⁸

At the end of July Mao returned to Peking from a provincial tour aimed mainly at ensuring support for his policies. He quickly began to take action, and on 5 August the People's Daily published a big character poster he had written praising the first wall poster put up in Peking University, and encouraging a "bombardment of the headquarters".⁹ Three days later the Cultural Revolution was formally adopted as party policy when the Central Committee issued a sixteen point document as a guide.¹⁰ This gave support to the red guard groups then

7. Mao Tse-tung, "Speech to the Albanian Military Delegation", Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968) Part II, p. 457.

8. Victor Nee, The Cultural Revolution at Peking University, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971, p. 64.

9. Mao Tse-tung, "P'ao ta szu-ling-pu" "炮打司令部" (Bombardment of the Headquarters), HC, 1967, No. 13, p. 3.

10. A translation of "The Sixteen-Point Decision" is found in Jean Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, New York: Random House, 1974, pp. 297-305.

forming. Over the next few months, Mao was to review red guard rallies attended by ten million people. At the first mass rally on 18 August, Mao had a red guard arm-band placed on his own arm.

To allow the students to participate in revolutionary activity, schools and universities were closed down. Students organised long marches which took them all over the countryside, visiting revolutionary sites and exchanging experiences. They launched attacks on the "four olds": old culture, old ideology, old customs and old habits, which were to be replaced by the "four news". Mao Tse-tung Thought was the guide to judge things by, and study groups were organised among the whole population.

Within universities, teachers frequently came under attack as bourgeois intellectuals, as did party administrators who were quite frequently removed from their posts. The central committee directive had stated that

in this great Cultural Revolution, the phenomenon of our schools being dominated by bourgeois intellectuals must be completely changed.¹¹

In the movement that followed, intellectuals, including historians were frequently criticised and compelled by the red guards to write self-criticisms. However, not all prominent historians were attacked. Kuo Mo-jo had made a self-criticism at the beginning of the movement renouncing all his previous works.

11. Ibid., p. 304.

Others also seem to have been protected by Mao. In March 1966, he commented that although Kuo Mo-jo and Fan Wen-lan belonged to the "emperor-king" school of historical studies they should still be protected.¹² Even for those not under attack, the disruption in the universities was not at all conducive to research. Articles written on history during the Cultural Revolution were few and far between, and when they did appear, they were more likely to have been written by party theoreticians or red guards than by professional historians. The red guard slogan of destroying the "four olds" also made it difficult to arrive at any balanced evaluation of the past. Certainly to have written positively on Confucius in the manner of the early sixties would have been impossible.

Criticism of officials within the party had included not only Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing, but also Chou Yang and Lu Ting-i who had both played important roles in the formulation of policies regulating academic life. However, by August 1967 Mao imposed limits on the criticisms of party officials when he supported Chou En-lai, who had himself begun to be attacked. Supported by members of the Cultural Revolution Group, red guards had begun to attack not only Chou En-lai, but had also put forward the slogan "strike down the

12. Mao Tse-tung, "Talk at Enlarged Meeting of the Political Bureau", Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968) Part II, p. 376.

handful of army leaders who have taken the capitalist road."¹³ As a result, Kuan Feng, Wang Li and later Ch'i Pen-yü, members of the so-called "May 16 Detachment", were dismissed from the Cultural Revolution Group, which from this time onwards had its power reduced. This was a turning point in the Cultural Revolution.

Attempts to restore order again were centred in the setting up of revolutionary committees which would provide a three-way alliance of cadres, revolutionary masses and the army. The attempts to establish order in the universities began in August 1968, when Mao asked worker propaganda teams to enter Tsinghua University. Factionalism had by this time reached the stage of civil war with different groups holding prisoners, and setting up barricades.¹⁴

With the situation quieter again, moves were made to set up experimental teaching programmes. Engineering faculties were generally first to be re-established. Although Peking University began teaching history in 1970, generally, the liberal arts subjects were to take longer to resume classes, some not resuming classes again until 1972.

In April 1969, the Ninth Party Congress was held, signifying a degree of unity however fragile, and the intention

13. See Jean Daubier, A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, pp. 205-210.

14. William Hinton, Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

to begin the task of construction again. This marked the end of the Cultural Revolution proper.

History in the Cultural Revolution

Since the Cultural Revolution was largely concerned with repudiating earlier ideas, its attacks in history need to be understood in the context of what had gone on before. One of the concepts that was initially criticised was that of historicism. This term had already become part of a heated controversy in 1963 and 1964. The controversy was not to be resolved until the Cultural Revolution had swept away the historians who had defended its use.

Throughout the fifties, the question of periodisation had been the focal point of discussion, reflecting the belief that the development of China conformed to a universal Marxist pattern. By the early sixties, when relations with the Soviet Union had become strained, a more nationalistic history emerged. Wu Han voiced the view that Chinese feudal history should be looked at more positively when he wrote

I have asked children for comments and they said that with dynasties which were all corrupt, it is difficult for us to love the history of our country.¹⁵

Demands made to examine Chinese history more objectively, without preconceptions of whether one class was more glorious

15. Wu Han 吴晗, "A Few Problems in the Teaching Materials of History and in History Study", Jen-min chiao-yü, 1961, No. 9. Translation from Chung Wah-min, "Criticism of Academic Theories in Communist China, 1966", Communist China 1966, Vol. 2, p. 132.

than another, were couched in terms of historicism. Chien Po-tsan had stated as early as 1961 that the peasants of the feudal era

should be treated in the spirit of historicism, and their image should not be created after the model of the modern proletariat.¹⁶

In 1963, Ning K'o wrote on the dilemma that historians faced in trying to use both historicism and class analysis. He pointed out that although it was easy to say that historicism and class viewpoint form one interrelated unity, this was really not the case since stressing historicism could bring a restoration of ancient things while stressing class viewpoint would cause the resulting interpretation to be mechanistic and oversimplified.¹⁷

Yüan Liang-i believed this dilemma came about because Ning K'o did not make a proper distinction between bourgeois "historicism" and Marxist historicism. Yüan argued that

We should recognize the unity of Marxism with historicism, and conquer mechanistic materialist, 'class viewpoint' bourgeois 'historicism'.¹⁸

16. Chien Po-tsan 翦伯贊, "Preliminary Opinions Concerning the Handling of certain Historical Questions", KMJP, 20 December 1961. Translation from ibid., p. 134.

17. Ning K'o 寧可, "Lun li-shih-chu-i ho chieh-chi kuan-tien" 論歷史主義和階級觀點 (On Historicism and Class Viewpoint), ISYC, 1963, No. 4, pp. 1-26.

18. Yüan Liang-i 袁良義, "Kuan-yü li-shih-chu-i yü chieh-chi kuan-tien" 關於歷史主義與階級觀點 (On Historicism and Class Viewpoint), KMJP, 6 November 1963.

Ning K'o basically agreed with this comment. In 1964, he wrote a long article in which he stated his views on Marxist historicism, saying that

only by standing on the platform of the proletarian class can there be true and genuine historicism, and also the principle of historicism be applied thoroughly.¹⁹

It seems, then, that there was agreement in the early sixties on the basic principle that if an objective account of history could be given, this must be made from a Marxist class viewpoint. By 1964, however, the theory of class compromise and the view that individuals of the exploiting class could sometimes stand on the side of the exploited class were repudiated. Ning K'o's efforts in arguing for historicism were attacked together with similar ideas that had been put forward by Chien Po-tsan's proposals.

Li Wen criticised Ning for putting class viewpoint and historicism on a par, claiming that

Now there are some people who oppose the negative evaluation put on Li Hsiu-ch'eng's selling out the revolution. They do this by utilizing the tool 'historicism' ... people can now see that historicism has become a front for opposing class viewpoint and class analysis.²⁰

19. Ning K'o, "Lun Ma-k'e-ssu chu-i te li-shih-chu-i" 論馬克思主義的歷史主義 (On Marxist Historicism), 1964, No. 3, p. 12.

20. Li Wen 力文, "Tsen-yang k'an-tai li-shih-chu-i: yü Ning K'o t'ung-chih shang-ch'ueh" 怎樣看待歷史主義——與寧可同志商榷 (How Should one Treat Historicism: A Debate with Comrade Ning K'o), KUJP, 18 November 1964.

By 1966, it was alleged that although Chien Po-tsan, the champion of historicism, had talked about Marxist analysis in history since he had also insisted on "historicism", it showed that he had not stressed class struggle enough.²¹ The campaign to criticise Chien Po-tsan's position was given added support when Mao referred to him as "going from bad to worse."²²

The attacks made on the use of historicism were in fact a call for more class analysis in history and a demand for a proletarian orientation when approaching historical studies. Some of the debates on this topic just before the Cultural Revolution were quite sophisticated. As the Cultural Revolution progressed, the supremacy of class analysis as opposed to a purely historicist analysis was taken for granted. The few history articles that did appear became less academic and more and more political.

A second important issue in historical studies during the Cultural Revolution was concerned with the question of evaluating the class standpoint of historical figures. In the early sixties, it had been argued that although Confucius was a member of the ruling class, he had been progressive in making concessions to the masses. The question of whether it was

21. Ch'ih Shih-wu 戚其武, "Ch'e-hsia Chien Po-tsan te 'li-shih chu-i' te hei-ch'i" 把卜翁伯贊的歷史主義的里旗 (Tear Down Chien Po-tsan's Black Flag of 'Historicism'), KMJF, 1 June 1966.

22. Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at Hangchow", in Schram, Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, p. 234.

possible that a member of one class could make concessions to another class was first brought up by Ch'i Pen-yü, who wrote on the Taiping general, Li Hsiu-ch'eng. He attacked Li for having written a confession and capitulating to class enemies after his capture by the Ch'ing forces.²³ He rejected the view put forward by authorities like Lo Erh-kang who argued Li had done this to buy time for the rebels.²⁴ Class capitulation and class compromise were to become twin evils in the course of the Cultural Revolution.

During the Cultural Revolution, it was considered impossible for peasant rebels to have made concessions to the ruling class without their having been class traitors. A more important issue concerned the question of concessions made by the ruling class to the peasants. In 1961, Chien Po-tsan had said

After a great peasant war, the feudal ruling class made a concession to the peasants to a certain extent in order to restore feudal order. But it is not the case that they made a concession after every peasant war.²⁵

23. Ch'i Pen-yü 戚本禹, "P'ing Li Hsiu-ch'eng tzu-shu: ping t'ung Lo Erh-kang, Liang Hu-lu, Lü Chi-i teng hsien-sheng shang-ch'ieh" 評李鴻章自述——並同戚本禹、梁啟超、呂振羽先生商榷 (A Critique of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Self-confession: A Debate with Messrs. Lo Erh-kang, Liang Hu-lu, Lü Chi-i), LSYC, 1963, No. 4, pp. 27-42.

24. Lo Erh-kang 羅子綱, "Kuan-yü wo hsieh Li Hsiu-ch'eng tzu-shu k'ao-cheng te chi-tien shuo-ming" 關於我寫李鴻章自述考證的幾點說明 (A Few Points Clarifying My Textual Analysis of Li Hsiu-ch'eng's Self-confession), ibid., pp. 43-46.

25. Chien Po-tsan, "Preliminary Opinions Concerning the Handling of Certain Historical Questions", Translation from Chung Wah-min, "Criticism of Academic Theories in Communist China, 1966", Communist China 1966, Vol. 2, p. 136.

Chien was said to have advocated the policy of concessions as early as 1951.²⁶ The most common argument against Chien on this was that the exploiting classes had never made any compromise to the peasants. Quoting Lu Hsün's Madman's Diary, Hung Chien-pin said that

In reality, there has never been any so-called 'policy of concession' in history. If we open the Twenty-four Histories, 'in between the lines, the whole book is covered by the two words "eat men"'. How could there have been a so-called policy of concession given to the peasants by the ruling classes.²⁷

Hung believed that Chien was wrong in arguing that some emperors at the beginning of new dynasties had taken such measures as lightening taxation and military conscription to alleviate the suffering of the peasants. These policies had been implemented only because they benefited the landlord class.²⁸

Closely connected to the question of whether there had been rulers who made concessions to the people was the question of the existence of good officials who essentially worked for the good of the people. This problem was discussed even more

26. See Ch'i Pen-yü, Lin Chieh 林杰 and Yen Ch'ang-kuei 嚴長貴, "Chien Po-tsan t'ung-chih te li-shih kuan-tien ying-tang p'i-p'an" 翦伯贊同志的歷史觀點應予批判 (Comrade Chien Po-tsan's Historical Outlook Should Be Criticised), HC, 1966, No. 4, p. 26.

27. Hung Chien-pin 洪堅斌, "Chien Po-tsan 'Jang-pu cheng-ts'e' lun te fan-tung shih-chih" 翦伯贊「反動政策」論的反動實質 (The Reactionary Nature of Chien Po-tsan's Policy of Concession), KMJP, 26 August 1967.

28. Ibid.

heatedly and at greater length, possibly because of its direct allusions to Mao's dismissal of P'eng Te-huai.²⁹ Yao Wen-yüan, in criticising Wu Han's Hai Jui Dismissed From Office, claimed that

the law, courts, and officials who carry out the ruling authority in feudal countries, including 'just officials', 'good officials', are only of the dictatorship of the landlord class, and can definitely not be above class, and cannot be tools of both the ruling and ruled classes. Of course, because of the internal make-up of the landlord class consists of many levels and groups, and because of the changes in the set-up of class struggles, there could have been differences and struggles in this or that question, in their attitudes to the interests of the big, middle, and small landlords and rich peasants, and in levels and methods of exploiting peasants.³⁰

According to Wu Han's critics, class struggles did not admit any compromise whatsoever.

It was quite clear that Wu Han had many supporters in the academic sphere quite apart from the strong political backing he had. As late as 1966, after he himself had written a self-criticism of his play,³¹ there were articles published defending his position.³² Those who defended him usually argued that Yao Wen-yüan had confused academic and scholarly

29. See The Case of P'eng Teh-huai, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1968.

30. Yao Wen-yüan 姚文元, "P'ing hsin-p'ien li-shih chü 'Hai Jui pa kuan'".

31. Wu Han, "Kuan-yü 'Hai Jui pa-kuan' te tzu-wo p'i-p'an".

32. See for example the articles reprinted in Ting Wang 丁玲 (ed.), Wu Han yü 'Hai Jui pa kuan' shih-chien, 吳晗與「海瑞罷官」 (Wu Han and the 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office' Affair), Hong Kong: Ming-pao yüeh-k'an, 1969, pp. 547-593.

issues and had unreasonably labelled Wu Han as reactionary simply because the latter had written about a good official. There were also some who claimed even in 1966 that benevolent government was the most positive aspect of Confucian teaching and that this teaching should be cherished.³³

Despite such efforts to stem the tide of criticism on some of the most noted scholars of China, the Red Guard movement, as it gathered momentum, overthrew both the political and bureaucratic apparatuses which defended these scholars. The interpretation stressing class struggle above everything else became more and more dominant in academic circles.

Historians as a group probably came under more attack than any other group of academics during the Cultural Revolution. Criticism of such historians as Chien Po-tsan, Wu Han, Hou Wai-lu and Liu Ta-nien continued throughout 1967. The Historical Study supplement of the Kuang-ming Daily was renamed New Historical Study on 18 February 1967, although it only continued publication for a few months. According to this new section, the aim of historical study in the future was

To study history again in a new way, re-write the whole history, write the history of class struggle, of the working people and peasant revolutionary wars, and write history into textbooks on class struggle....³⁴

33. Lu Yu 陆雨, "'Hai Jui pa kuan' mei-yu chi-chi i-i ma?" 海瑞能否没有积极意义吗? (Has 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office' No Positive Significance?), JMJP, 19 January 1966. Reprinted in Ting Wang, pp. 574-578.

34. Translation taken from Chao Ts'ung, "Communist China's Cultural Work in 1967", Communist China 1967 Part II, Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1969, p. 165.

The first article in this column repudiated both Chien Po-tsan and Wu Han.³⁵

There were calls in the media throughout 1966 and 1967 to "Capture the position in the field of historical studies seized by the bourgeoisie" and "Study history for the sake of revolution." The article "Capture the Position in the Field of Historical Studies Seized by the Bourgeoisie" argued that bourgeois "authorities" in history have been "entrenched in a number of positions in the field of historical studies."³⁶ These historians were charged with having held that "the history of mankind is the history of emperors and kings, generals and prime ministers ... that the favours granted by emperors and kings, generals and prime ministers determine everything."³⁷ The People's Daily vowed that

In this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we must completely destroy the reactionary bourgeois positions in historical studies and smash the counter-revolutionary idealist system of historical studies which serve the restoration of capitalism.³⁸

Ch'i Pen-yü, whose article was praised by Mao, claimed that in

35. Wu Wen-ying 武文英, "Li-shih hsieh-chieh te tzu-ch'an chieh-chi pao-huang-tang pi-shui ch'ieh-ti p'i-p'an" 历史学界的反党反社会主义必须彻底批判 (The capitalist pro-emperor party within historical circles must be thoroughly criticised), KMJP, 18 February 1967.

36. JMJP editorial, 3 June 1966. Translations from Peking Review, 1966, No. 25, pp. 13-15.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

order to study history for the sake of the revolution, the standpoint of the proletariat must be adopted.³⁹ This, he argued was the most important question to keep in mind when studying history. Ever since Confucius, historians had portrayed peasant rebellions in a bad light, and peasant heroes had been painted as cruel criminals, so that even the May Fourth writers found it difficult to break away from this traditional way of looking at history.⁴⁰

Philosophy in the Cultural Revolution

The debates in philosophy during the Cultural Revolution period were similar to those in history in the increasing emphasis placed on class analysis. The question of inheriting traditional ethics, for example, was seen as essentially one which examined inheriting particular ethics belonging to particular classes. In the early sixties Feng Yu-lan developed the theory of the "universal form" to support his claim that Confucian values could be inherited. This was heavily criticised in 1963 and 1965 as being no other than a revised version of the already discredited concept of "abstract inheritance" that

39. Ch'i Pen-yü, "Wei ke-ming erh yen-chiu li-shih" 為革命而研究歷史 (Study History for the Sake of Revolution), HC, 1965, No. 13, pp. 14-22.

40. Ibid.

he had advocated in the fifties.⁴¹ In 1962, Wu Han had also published two articles on moral inheritance, in which he advocated that "it does not matter if a morality is feudal or comes from the bourgeois class, the proletariat can absorb some aspects of it."⁴² His reasoning had been that since

the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force.⁴³

If the proletariat were to inherit any morality from the past, it could not help but inherit the morality of the ruling class. It might as well therefore inherit the better aspects of it. As examples, he quoted Confucian concepts such as loyalty, li and righteousness as relevant to a socialist state.

In August 1963, Hsü Ch'i-hsien criticised Wu Han, claiming that it was not true that morality in the past was entirely that of the ruling class. He quoted as examples the wandering brigands described by Ssu-ma Chien who had their own code of

41. For a summary of the more important articles in this controversy in 1963, see Ch'iu 仇, "Kuan-yü ssu-hsiang te 'p'u-p'ien hsing hsing-shih' wen-t'i te t'ao-lun" 關於思想的普遍性問題之討論 (The Discussions on the Problem of the 'universal form' of Thought), KMJJP, 1 December 1963.

42. Quoted in Yüeh Hua 岳華, "Kuan-yü tao-te te chieh-chi-hsing ho ch'eng-chi hsing wen-t'i te t'ao-lun chieh-hsiao" 關於道德的階級性和繼承性問題之討論 (An Introduction to the Discussions on the Question of the Class-nature and Inheritability of Morality), originally in Pei-ching jih-pao 北京日報 (Peking Daily), 18 December 1965, reprinted in Ting Wang (ed.), Wu Han yü Hai Jui Pa-kuan shih-chien, pp. 711-716, p. 711.

43. Translation from Marx and Engels, "The German Ideology", Selected Works Vol. 1, p. 47.

behaviour, quite different to that of the ruling class.⁴⁴

Wu Han replied that while he basically agreed with Hsü, that this did not mean that all those in the ruling class were therefore wicked.⁴⁵ In fact, the history of China had produced many national heroes and revolutionary leaders.

This line of argument was very similar to the policies of concession and compromise alleged to have been advocated by Chien Po-tsan in the field of history. Besides this article, nearly forty critical articles were published on this topic by the end of 1965.⁴⁶ Most of the articles attacked Wu Han, saying that morality is the product of the proletariat and class struggle, and that far from inheriting the vestiges of feudal morality, one should struggle to extirpate them.⁴⁷

A more scholarly repudiation was offered by Kuan Feng and Wu Fu-ch'i, who claimed that in class societies, class conflict implied that there would also be conflict in the respective morals of the antagonistic classes. While the proletariat

44. Hsü Ch'i-hsien 許啟賢, "Kuan-yü tao-te te chieh-chi-hsing yü chi-ch'eng-hsing te i-hsieh wen-t'i" 關於道德的階級性與繼承性的一點問題 (A Few Problems Concerning the Class-nature and Inheritability of Morality), KMJP, 15 August 1963.

45. Wu Han, "San shuo tao-te" 三說道德 (A Third Discussion on Morality), KMJP, 19 August 1963.

46. Chung Wah-min, "Criticism of Academic Theories in Communist China, 1966", Communist China 1966, Vol. 2, p. 128.

47. For a summary of this debate, see Yüeh Hua, "Kuan-yü tao-te te chieh-chi-hsing ho ch'eng-chi-hsing wen-t'i te t'ao-lun chieh-hsiao".

sometimes borrow terms from old feudal or bourgeois ethics, the contents of such terms must be different. Far from inheriting feudal and bourgeois morality as Wu Han had suggested, they argued that new China should thoroughly repudiate and discard it.⁴⁸

They referred to several Confucian concepts which Wu Han had suggested were good qualities to show that although the terms were the same, the contents were quite different in the socialist period. Loyalty in the old days meant loyalty to the landlord class whereas in a socialist state, it meant loyalty to the state and the people. Whereas feudal ethics demanded that there was to be absolute obedience to the point of children niding parents' guilts, the filial piety in a socialist state was based entirely on class terms, with parents and offsprings helping each other in the building of the socialist state.⁴⁹

This discussion of moral inheritance developed more and more into a discussion of class ethics. In the thinking expressed by the articles at this time general opinion held that a break must be made with feudal ethics and that if any morality was to be inherited from the past, it should be that of the labouring people.

48. Kuan Feng and Wu Fu-ch'i 吳傅次, "P'ing Wu Han t'ung-chih te tao-te lun" 評吳晗同志的《道德論》 (A Critique of Comrade Wu Han's Theory of Morality), CHYC, 1966, No. 1, pp. 28-45.

49. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

The attacks on inheriting feudal ethics had not subsided when another philosophical controversy arose in the philosophical columns of the newspapers and journals. This was concerned with the seemingly abstract problem of whether dialectics was fundamentally "one dividing into two" or "combining two into one". It was universally admitted that both were necessary for dialectics, the question was that of which process was the more fundamental one.

In May 1964, two students at the Higher Party School wrote an article in Kuang-ming Daily which suggested that "combining two into one" was the fundamental element in dialectics.⁵⁰ The source of this interpretation was traced to their teacher at the school, Yang Hsien-chen. Yang himself not long after wrote to defend this position, pointing to the Communist and Nationalist alliance during the resistance war against Japan as an example of the law of "combining two into one".⁵¹

Critics were quick to declare that Yang Hsien-chen erred in saying that "combining two into one" was more fundamental

50. Ai Heng-wu 艾恒武 and Lin Ch'ing-shan 林青山, "I fen wei erh yü ho erh erh i" "一分为二"与"合二为一" (One Divides into Two and Combining Two Into One), KMJP, 29 May 1964.

51. Quoted in Hsiao Shu 萧述, "'Ho erh erh i' lun te fan-pien-cheng-fa shih-tse" "合二为一"的辩证法实质 (The Anti-dialectical Nature of 'Combining Two into One'), JMJP, 14 August 1964.

than "one divides into two." They quoted from Mao's

The unity of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.⁵²

to substantiate their attacks.⁵³

This attack coincided with the worsening of relations between Russia and China. Any suggestions of dialectics meaning essentially that two should merge into one was heavily criticised and articles began to appear saying that Yang's theory was equal to capitulationism.⁵⁴ It was also argued that Yang's theory was opposed to the view put forward by Mao that class struggle was absolute. By saying that two combines into one, the position taken was said to be similar to one which talked about the extinction of class struggle.⁵⁵

What Yang Hsien-chen had argued for was very similar to the doctrine of the mean that Confucius had advocated, in its

52. Mao Tse-tung, "How to Handle Contradictions Amongst the People".

53. Ha Te Erh 哈的尔 and Yieh Li Ta Hsi 叶里达西, "Pu t'ung-i yung 'ho erh erh i' lai ch'ü-chieh tui-li t'ung-i k'uei-lü" 不同意用'合二而一'来曲解辩证统一规律 (A Disagreement with Using 'Combining Two into One' to Distort the Law of the Unity of Opposites), JMJP, 19 July 1964.

54. Hua-pei-chu hung-lien fan-hsiu chen-tou-tui 华北局红联反修战阵队, "Ch'e-ti p'i-p'an chung-kuo Ho-lu-hsiao-fu te t'ou-hsiang chu-i che-hsüeh - 'ho erh erh i' lun" 彻底批判中国头号修正主义的投降主义哲学——合二而一论 (Thoroughly Repudiate China's Khrushchev's Philosophy of Capitulationism - the theory of 'Combining Two into One'), JMJP, 1 November 1967.

55. Fan Hsiu Ping 反修平, "Ch'e-ti p'i-p'an 'chieh-chi tou-cheng hsi-mi' lun te fan-tung miu-lun" 彻底批判'阶级斗争熄灭论'的反动谬论 (Thoroughly Repudiate the Reactionary Absurdity of the View on the Extinction of Class Struggle), JMJP, 20 August 1967.

distaste for extremes.⁵⁶ Confucius, as well as other traditional philosophers like Chuang-tzu, had earlier been criticised by the left because of their policies of compromise.⁵⁷ Thus, the criticisms of Yang Hsien-chen was an indirect way of banishing the traditional assessments of concepts such as compromise and the golden mean as virtues.

In August 1964 Mao Tse-tung had said that

it is only when there is class struggle that there can be philosophy. It is a waste of time to discuss epistemology apart from practice. The comrades who study philosophy should go down to the countryside.⁵⁸

Again in 1965 he stated that "those of you who are engaged in philosophy should go in for practical philosophy."⁵⁹

Together with the call for more practical philosophy and going to the countryside, another important aspect of the Cultural Revolution policies was that the peasants themselves were encouraged to study and write philosophy.⁶⁰ This philosophy, of course, was Marxist philosophy as interpreted by Mao in his

56. The relationship of Yang Hsien-chen's theory to classical philosophy is discussed in Donald Munro, "The Yang Hsien-chen Affair", The China Quarterly, 1965, No. 22, pp. 75-82.

57. Ibid., p. 77. See also Lao-tzu che-hsüeh t'ao-lun chi.

58. Mao Tse-tung, "Talk on Questions of Philosophy", Translation from Schram, Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed, p. 212

59. Mao Tse-tung, "Speech at Hangchow", in ibid., p. 234.

60. Throughout the Cultural Revolution, and immediately after, many articles on philosophy by peasants appeared in newspapers and journals like Red Flag.

Quotations.⁶¹

By 1966, philosophy was widely discussed as something which the workers, peasants and soldiers should master. In an article entitled "The Era when the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Master Theory has Begun", a Red Flag report wrote that this was the first time a movement had been launched in which the masses were encouraged to study Marxism on such a wide scale.⁶²

They learn with a problem in mind. Once they've learnt it, they apply their knowledge. Thus they learn and practise at the same time. They use Mao Tse-tung Thought to analyse concrete problems, solve concrete problems. This not only improves their work and change their objective world outlook, but also raise their consciousness and change their subjective world outlook.⁶³

Two of Mao's most studied philosophical tracts were "On Practice" and "On Contradiction".⁶⁴ These works were supposed to have helped in all kinds of work from weather forecasting to digging ditches.⁶⁵ Claims for problems

61. Mao Tse-tung, Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1966.

62. Red Flag Commentator, "Kung-nung-ping ch'ün-chung chang-wo li-lun te shih-tai k'ai-shih le" 工农兵群众掌握理论的时代开始 (The Era When the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers Master Theory Has Begun), HC, 1966, No. 2, pp. 16-19.

63. Ibid., p. 19.

64. These are collected in Mao Tse-tung, Four Essays on Philosophy, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968.

65. Tuan Ch'un-tso 段春作, "Yün-yung 'shih-chien-lun' chung-chieh min-chien ts'e-t'ien ching-yen" 运用《实践论》总结民间经验 (Using 'On Practice' to Summarise Folk Experience in Weather Forecasting), HC, 1966, No. 2, pp. 20-27. Liu P'ei-shun 刘培顺, "'Mao-tun lun' te ssu-hsiang chin-le shui-ni-yao" 《矛盾论》的更推进水泥窑 (The Thinking of 'On Contradiction' Has Entered the Cement Kiln), HC, 1962, No. 2, pp. 28-32.

supposedly solved by Mao Tse-tung Thought were often carried to unbelievable lengths.⁶⁶ The way that philosophy could be used as a class weapon is the theme of the widely distributed pamphlet Philosophy is No Mystery. The editor noted in the preface,

The experience of Chinchien in studying philosophy proves beyond doubt that workers, peasants and soldiers can master philosophy, because they study in the struggle and for the struggle. Their study of philosophy is necessary for the three revolutionary movements and for proletarian dictatorship.⁶⁷

This view that philosophy could be mastered by the masses was adopted right through the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath. During the anti-Confucius movement, all units such as brigades, factories, schools and universities carried out study meetings of Confucius.

Criticisms of Confucius during the Cultural Revolution

During the Cultural Revolution, only two articles which appeared in the same issue of the People's Daily seem to have been written specifically on Confucius. As well attacks on pre-Cultural Revolution writings or on historians sometimes included specific references to Confucius and Confucian values.

66. George Urban (ed.), The Miracles of Chairman Mao, Yorkshire: Tom Stacey, 1971.

67. Philosophy is No Mystery: Peasants Put Their Study to Work, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972. Chinchien is the name of the production brigade which the book describes.

Feng Yu-lan for example was criticised also during the Cultural Revolution although he had himself produced a self-criticism of his views of Confucius. In the introduction to A History of Chinese Philosophy, New Edition, in 1962, Feng had proposed that the study of history was different to other sciences because it sought to describe individual events in history whereas other sciences sought to extract generalisations from individual events and necessity from contingency. The task of history was to describe faithfully discrete events in the concrete process of social development.⁶⁸

In 1966 Hsia Chen-t'ao criticised his views as being inconsistent with the policy that historical study must serve the politics of the proletariat and must employ the methods of class analysis. He stated,

Mr. Feng Yu-lan had said, 'If we want to study Confucius, then we could only take Confucius, and not replace him by Lao-tzu.' Obviously nobody could deny this. But what Mr. Feng meant was that Confucius was an independent 'individual item' not related to any 'class'. Was it actually like this? Confucius was the representative thinker of the slave-owning class at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (there are different views on what class Confucius really represented, but this does not influence the substance of the problem we are discussing here). His thinking reflected the interests of the slave-owning class, and it was also something of a model for the then slave-owning class ideology. Therefore, we cannot 'individualize' Confucius, and we definitely cannot make this 'individualization' absolute.

68. Feng Yu-lan, Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih hsin-p'ien, Vol. 1, p. 23.

Not only should Confucius be treated like this, but when we study any thinker or historical figure, we should see him as the representative model of a certain class to study.⁶⁹

Criticisms like this were made in the early phases of the Cultural Revolution, and were rather detailed and scholarly. As the Cultural Revolution got under way, however, academic journals like Historical Research and Philosophical Research suspended publication and tabloids rather than regular journals were published by the Red Guards. While on the whole Red Guards in their attacks on tradition generally did not go into any detail on why traditional values should be rejected, or what aspects of tradition were bad, what they lacked in sophistication were made up by their enthusiastic dedication and strict adherence to Maoist principles.⁷⁰

Under the slogan "dare to rebel", they criticised all those before them who had advocated anything which had overtones of going back to the traditional days. Historians whom the

69. Hsia Chen-t'ao 夏甄陶, "Li-shih pien-cheng fa ho Feng Yu-lan hsien-sheng te 'li-shih ke-t'i lun'", 世界辩证法认识史 毛主席的"历史唯物主义" (Historical Dialectics and Mr. Feng Yu-lan's 'On Historical Individualism'), Hsin chien-she 新建设 (New Construction), 20 February 1966, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 109-121, p. 115.

70. This did not mean that the Red Guards all believed in one thing. Their dedication did not prevent them from having different interpretations of Maoist thinking. In Tsinghua University alone, there were many factions, many of which were involved in armed conflict with one another. See William Hinton, Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972.

Red Guards criticised for their speeches at the 1962 conference on Confucius included Li Ching-ch'un, Liu Tao-sheng, Yü Hsiu, Lü Cheng-yü, Chin Ching-fang, Kao Tsan-fei, Liu Chieh and Chin Chao-tzu.⁷¹

The emphasis on youth, and the general disruption in the universities where all the teachers and students were drawn into the Cultural Revolution did not provide an atmosphere conducive to academic research. It is not surprising that the two articles which did appear during the Cultural Revolution were written by Red Guards, of the Ching Kangshan combat group of Peking Normal University. They appeared on 10 January 1967 with an editor's note appended which stated

In our socialist new China, there is absolutely no room for Confucian concepts and capitalist and revisionist ideas which serve the exploiting classes. If these ideas are not uprooted, it will be impossible to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and build socialism and communism. In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, one of our important tasks is to pull down the rigid corpse of Confucius and thoroughly eradicate the utterly reactionary Confucian concepts.⁷²

The kind of language used and the strength of the attacks on Confucius marked a new stage in the communist evaluation of Confucius. In the past not even those most critical of Confucius

71. Pei-ching shih-fan ta-hsüeh Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang hung-wei-ping ching-kang-shan chan-tou-t'uan 北京師範大學毛澤東思想紅衛兵
中國人民報附張 "K'ung-tzu t'ao-lun hui shih niu kuei she-sheng hsiang tang chin-kung te hei-hui" 孔子評議會是牛鬼蛇神
白文區政的宣傳 ('Forum on Confucius' - A Black Session of Monsters and Demons for Attacking the Party), JMJF, 10 January 1967.

72. Ibid. Translation from Survey of China Mainland Press, 1967, No. 3863, p. 5.

had rejected Confucian thought so completely.

Another new feature was the relationship of the question of Confucianism to intra-party struggle. Besides criticising a number of historians, such prominent Party leaders as Chou Yang and Liu Shao-ch'i came under attack as "Confucianist". They were both said to have been responsible for the convening of the conference to commemorate Confucius' held in 1962. Reference to this conference came up again and again in Red Guard criticisms of Liu and Chou. They saw the fact that the conference was held only two months after Mao had issued the call to "never forget class struggle" at the Tenth Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee as full of political significance.

This was a black session conducted by the bourgeois right to launch a counter-attack against the revolutionary spirit of the communique of the Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee.⁷³

They also argued that Liu Shao-ch'i's On Self-cultivation had its base in Confucian thought.

This emphasis on the political motivation of those who praised Confucius ran through both articles. Attempts to raise Confucius' prestige by such claims as the statement that he was "a great philosopher, statesman and educator without equal" or that Confucius was the focal point for unifying China's nationalistic ideas were all seen by the Red Guards as attempts

73. Ibid., p. 5.

to lower Mao's prestige. For them, the focal point was Mao, and any attempts to elevate Confucius' prestige were seen as attempts to substitute reactionary feudal thoughts for the revolutionary truth of the proletariat, carried out for ulterior political purposes.

Mao's writings were used as a criterion for evaluating many of the claims made for Confucius. In the early sixties a number of writers had claimed that Confucius had praised benevolent government and rule by moral virtue. To this, the Red Guards replied by quoting Mao,

There is no such thing in the world as love or hate without reason or cause. As regards the so-called 'human love' there had been no such thing since mankind was divided into classes.

This being for the Red Guards sufficient to refute the 1962 kind of view, they then went on to question why some people had argued in this way. This they believed, was an attempt to blur class boundaries and deny class contradiction, and an attempt to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The second article by the Red Guards consisted of thirty extracts from speeches made at the 1962 conference, without attributing them to their authors, and grouped according to the error they displayed with a short note at the end of each group explaining the political motivation for such "false" claims. The headings of the groups were:

1. Frenziedly Lauding and Glorifying Confucius, Maliciously Slandering and Attacking Mao Tse-tung's Thought.

2. Propagating Confucius' Notions of "Benevolent Government" and "Rule by Moral Virtue", Maliciously Attacking Proletarian Dictatorship, and Openly Provoking a Counter-revolutionary Restoration.
3. Using Ancient Things to Satirize the Present, Attacking Others by Insinuation, Maliciously Assailing the Three Red Banners, and Cursing the Party Leadership.
4. Vainly Trying To Dress Up the Idealistic World Outlook of Confucius as a World Outlook of Dialectical Materialism.
5. Advocating the Idea of "Loving and Embracing One Another" between One Individual and Another, In a Vain Attempt to Blur the Class Boundary Line and Obliterate Class Struggle.⁷⁴

These headings reveal the standpoint of the Red Guards as much as they indicate the tone of some of the speeches made in 1962, some of which had already been considered in the last chapter. For example, under heading 4, there is the statement that

the world outlook, in my opinion, is not only materialistic and appears to savour a little of dialectical materialism, it practically resembles a red thread which ran through Confucius' life-long teachings.⁷⁵

This sounds as if it may have come from Feng Yu-lan. The Red Guards criticised this as an attempt to confuse black with white, and right with wrong.

74. Idem, "Niu-kuei she-sheng tsai K'ung-tzu t'ao-lun hui shang fang le hsieh shen-mo tu" 牛鬼蛇神在「孔子讨論會」上放了些毒药 (What Poisons Were Spread by the Monsters and Demons at the 'Forum on Confucius'), JMJP, 10 January 1967. Translation from ibid., pp. 9-13.

75. Translation from ibid., p. 11.

On the whole, the Red Guard articles regarded these extracts from the 1962 Shantung conference as obvious fallacies. Beginning with the pre-supposition that Confucius was reactionary, it was inconceivable to them that Confucius might have been a materialist. The only need for comment was to point out the political aims of those who put forward these claims. They did not at any stage quote from Confucius in an attempt to prove that he was an idealist. In this sense, although many of the criticisms made by the Red Guards at this stage resembled those made later in the seventies, they were not based on firsthand research, and were thus considerably less sophisticated. While in the seventies similar claims were made, usually there were references from Confucius himself to back up the argument.

Concluding Remarks

While during the Cultural Revolution very little had been directly written on Confucius, the kind of changes that occurred in historical interpretation were to have a decisive influence on evaluations of Confucius in the early seventies.

The Cultural Revolution was a watershed in historical interpretation. Although there were differences in opinion in historical studies in the fifties and sixties, apart from a brief interlude during the Great Leap Forward, a considerable degree of agreement can be discerned. On the whole, the trend had been

more and more towards a favourable evaluation of China's past, and hence of Confucius. The Cultural Revolution in its sweeping attacks on tradition was to make it unlikely that historians would write again on Confucius in that way, at least not in the immediate future.

The major change in historical interpretation was the greater stress placed on class analysis, and on history as a political issue. Many of the older historians had in the fifties and sixties tried to find loopholes by which they could include a measure of traditional interpretation. Historicism had been one of these. The Cultural Revolution in its bitter repudiations of these methods laid the grounds for a new approach in which it would be no longer enough to simply preface an article or a book with a quote from Mao. The use of traditional interpretations had been particularly pronounced in pre-Cultural Revolution views of Confucius. The overwhelming importance attached to using class analysis meant that if the Cultural Revolution policies were later to be followed, evaluations made on Confucius, or indeed of any historical figure, would have to be based primarily on his class attributes. This directly negated the largely historicist analysis of Confucius in the early sixties, when it was generally claimed that for his time, he had been progressive.

Debates in philosophy and history also had indirect effects on evaluations of Confucius in the seventies. Rejection of

the notion that certain officials might compromise to work on behalf of the masses as well as the ruling classes made the common argument of the early sixties that Confucius had been of the ruling class yet progressive untenable. The debate on "two combines into one" led to the repudiation of ideas of harmony, a basic concept in Confucianism. The Cultural Revolution placed emphasis on the idea that it was the masses, and not emperors and generals, who made history. This gave rise to a renewed interest in the role of the "people" in history. In evaluations of Confucius in the early seventies, historians also began to turn their attention to the study of slave uprisings in Confucius' time, and placing Confucius in a wider social context.

Perhaps the most important feature of the Cultural Revolution was the extent to which history became a political issue. While political movements had certainly had their effects in the fifties and sixties, this was of minor importance compared to the effects of the Cultural Revolution. In the fifties and early sixties, history had largely been left to historians. With the criticism of Wu Han's play as a political tract, history assumed a new importance. It was to be examined for its relevance to the present. The political nature of history was spelled out by the People's Daily when it stated that "Historical science is an important ideological battlefield."⁷⁶ Nowhere has

76. "Capture the Positions in the Field of Historical Studies Seized by the Bourgeoisie", Translation from Peking Review, 1966, No. 25, p. 14.

this been more apparent than in the anti-Confucius movement. The Cultural Revolution, which began with the assumption that "P'eng Te-huai was Hai Jui," meant that future historical interpretations, especially analyses of historical figures, would be seen as reflections of contemporary events. Historical analogy had traditionally been used in China, but it was to be used even more strongly immediately after the Cultural Revolution with the explicit equation of Lin Piao with Confucius.

The Cultural Revolution also saw a change in who wrote in history. A number of the older authoritative historians had been disgraced, and even those who were to eventually write again could no longer write as of old. Younger academics were on the ascendancy, but even more importantly, the emphasis on the workers and peasants mastering philosophy led to a popularisation of history which meant that intellectuals could no longer be the only ones to write on Confucius.

The few articles that were written on Confucius during the Cultural Revolution are not noted for their sophistication of historical method. They amount to little more than short polemics. Indeed the Red Guards who wrote them appeared to have regarded their criticisms as largely self-evident. In the line of argument they took, however, they marked the real break with the kind of argument presented in the early sixties. The groundwork for the anti-Confucius movement was laid during the early stages of the Cultural revolution. Just as the fifties

and early sixties showed a degree of continuity, so too do the articles of the Cultural Revolution and the early seventies.

Chapter V

THE EARLY SEVENTIES

Historical Setting

By the time of the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969, the destructive phase of the Cultural Revolution had come to an end. The task of constructing new forms and institutions for the period of socialism still lay ahead.¹ While China entered a more tranquil phase as Mao himself had pointed out, this would not mean the end of struggle.²

Although order had clearly to be established after the Cultural Revolution, it was to be an order based on quite different principles to those of the sixties. There were innovations in many fields. In universities, experimental programmes were implemented. By 1970, a few universities were admitting students on a regular basis, although generally speaking liberal arts universities and departments were slower

1. Party reconstruction began when the first provincial party committee was formed in Hunan in November 1970.

2. At the Lushan plenum in 1970, Mao clashed with the Lin Piao group, later in September issuing a letter to criticise Ch'en Po-ta. In June 1971, Lin Piao made his last public appearance. In September a Chinese plane was reported to have crashed in Mongolia. It was later alleged that Lin Piao had fled after planning an abortive coup and attempt on Mao's life. For an account of this episode, see Jaap van Ginneken, The Rise and Fall of Lin Piao, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972.

to open. While it was relatively easy to see how scientific subjects could be integrated with practice, it was much more difficult to decide how to relate liberal arts subjects to practice. For them, the guideline was to be Mao's instruction to take the whole of society as their factory.³ Peking University was amongst the first to admit students. Its 1970 enrollments in the philosophy department later produced an annotated version of the Analects as their graduation exercise.⁴

Articles criticising Confucius began to appear as early as January 1969. Thirteen of these articles were gathered together in a booklet Thoroughly Criticise the Teachings of Confucius and Mencius, first published in Shanghai in 1970.⁵ It was also reprinted in 1971. Since almost all the articles had been first published in the Shanghai newspapers Wen Hui Daily and Liberation Daily, this suggests that the Shanghai-based

3. This idea was discussed in a number of articles in 1971 and 1972. See for example Kuang-tung shih-fan hsüeh-yüan ke-ming wei-yüan hui 廣東師範學院革命委員會, "Tuo-k'uai hao-sheng p'ei-yang shih-tzu te 'liu-tung ta-hsüeh'" 多快好省培養師資的「流動大學」 (A 'Mobile University' which Quickly and Economically Nurtures Teaching Staff), HC, 1971, No. 6, pp. 84-88.

4. Pei-ching ta-hsüeh che-hsüeh-hsi i-chiu-ch'i ling chi kung-nung-ping hsüeh-yüan 北京大學哲學系一九七〇級上學期學員 Lun-yü p'i-chu 《論語》批註 (The Analects with Critical Annotations), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1974.

5. Thoroughly Criticise the Teachings of Confucius and Mencius, Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1971. A translation of this book appears in Survey of China Mainland Press Supplement, 1971, No. 292, pp. 1-17 and No. 293, pp. 1-35. I have as yet not been able to locate the original Chinese edition.

faction had wanted to start an anti-Confucius movement as early as 1969. The other interesting aspect of this booklet lies in its links with the armed forces. A few articles had been published first in the Liberation Army Daily while others were written by members of the army and air force. Several of the articles were written by representatives of the masses, and dealt with similar themes to those written during the anti-Confucius movement. These articles generally linked the name of Liu Shao-ch'i to Confucius, claiming that Liu Shao-ch'i had tried to use Confucianism to revive capitalism in China. Liu's book How To Be A Good Communist was analysed to show its debts to Confucian concepts. While most articles at least referred to the theme of restoration, this trend was much less pronounced than during the anti-Confucius movement.

Two articles on Confucius received widespread coverage in the national newspapers and in foreign language publications at this time. At the end of 1969, an article "Ghost of Confucius' Shop and Actual Class Struggle" was widely published,⁶ and in June 1970 an article written by the Shantung Provincial Party Committee was published.⁷ Both called for a movement

6. Shih Fan-hsiu 史文修, "K'ung-chia-tien-te yu-ling yü hsien-shih te chieh-chi tou-cheng" 孔孟的幽灵与现实的阶级斗争 (Ghost of Confucius' Shop and Actual Class Struggle), HC, 1969, Nos. 6 and 7, Translated in Peking Review, 12 December 1969, No. 50, pp. 18-21. The 'shih' in the author's name has been incorrectly remanized as 'chih' in this translation.

7. The Writing Group of Shangtung Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "P'i-p'an K'ung-chiu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang" 批判孔丘的教育思想 (A Criticism of Confucius' Thinking on Education), JMJP, 19 July 1971. Translated in Peking Review, 17 September 1971, No. 38, pp. 6-9.

to be launched to criticise Confucius, linking Confucianism with attacks on the Cultural Revolution. The 1969 article stated that

the reactionary influence of the 'doctrine of Confucius and Mencius' is still poisoning the people, that is to say, this doctrine still has its social ideological foundation If we slacken our efforts in the criticism of old ideas, it is very possible that outdated things will be restored and consolidated in new forms.⁸

It also argued that

the supreme goal for which Confucius worked all his life was the restoration of the rule and system of hierarchy which flourished at the heyday of slavery.⁹

These articles written in the early seventies all show characteristics common to writings in the later period, and contain many of the basic arguments put forward during the anti-Confucius movement. The break with the kinds of reasoning and ideas put forward in the early sixties was quite marked.

In 1972, Chou En-lai was at the height of his power and influence. China began to move even further in a more conservative direction. There was a reversion to a number of pre-Cultural Revolution policies, as for example in the use of material incentives and private plots. In education, discussion now turned to quality, and there was some questioning of the Cultural Revolution policies. No articles specifically attacking Confucius seemed to have appeared, but several articles were

8. Translation taken from Peking Review, 1969, No. 50, p. 21.

9. Ibid., p. 19.

important forerunners of the campaign that was to develop in the following year.

In May 1972, a new book on Ch'in Shih Huang appeared, heralding a new approach in which the first emperor was lauded as a progressive.¹⁰ It too was published in Shanghai, and was the first biography of a Chinese emperor to appear after the Cultural Revolution. The book gave a new evaluation of Ch'in Shih Huang's anti-Confucian activities, praising rather than condemning his suppression of the Confucian scholars. This represented a definite break with traditional interpretations.

In July 1972, Red Flag contained an article by Kuo Mo-jo on the periodisation of Chinese history, which was to become the definitive statement on periodisation during the anti-Confucius movement.¹¹ Another important historian to write in 1972 was Yang Jung-kuo, whose article "The Struggle Between the Two Lines in the Ideological Sphere in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period" was published in Red Flag in December.¹²

These articles attracted little attention until after the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973. This congress met partly

10. See Wang Gungwu, "'Burning Books and Burying Scholars Alive': Some Recent Interpretations Concerning Ch'in Shih-huang", Papers on Far Eastern History, March 1974, No. 9, p. 139.

11. Kuo Mo-jo, "Chung-kuo ku-tai-shih te fen-ch'i wen-t'i"
中國古代史的分期問題 (The Problem of Periodisation of Ancient China), HC, 1972, No. 7, pp. 56-62.

12. Yang Jung-kuo, "Ch'un-ch'iu chan-kuo shih-ch'i ssu-hsiang ling-yü nei liang-t'iao lu-hsien te tou-cheng"
春秋我國時期史與領域內兩條路線的鬥爭 (The Struggle Between the Two Lines in the Ideological Sphere in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period), HC, 1972, No. 12, pp. 45-54.

to remove Lin Piao's name from the constitution, yet despite the apparent unity which the calling of the Congress might suggest, there were obvious signs that there was still dissent within the party.

The anti-Confucius movement began to build up almost immediately after the Congress. A second article by Yang Jung-kuo entitled "Confucius - A Thinker Who Stubbornly Supported the Slave System" appeared, to be followed almost immediately by several other articles, mostly written under pseudonyms.¹³

In September, a new journal similar in style and format to Red Flag appeared in Shanghai. Titled Study and Criticism, it was connected with Fudan University.¹⁴ Until its demise in October 1976, it gave the lead in many campaigns and contributed important leading articles to the anti-Confucius movement. Its first issue carried several articles on the Confucians and

13. Yang Jung-kuo, "K'ung-tzu: wan-ku ti wei-hu nu-li-chih te ssu-hsiang-chia" 孔子——顽固地维护奴隶制的思想家 (Confucius - A Thinker Who Stubbornly Supported the Slave System), JMJP, 7 August 1973.

14. The journal was published nominally as the "gazette of Fudan University". However, it was later alleged that "its editorial office was not to be found on the campus. The power of editing and publishing was actually in the hands of two trustees of the gang of four planted in the writing group under the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee." Ta Kung Pao Weekly Supplement (English Edition), 31 March 1977, p. 6.

Legalists, including one by Shih Lun "On Confucian Worship and anti-Legalism",¹⁵ and another by Shih Shang-hui on Wang An-shih's Legalist thought.¹⁶ At first, the title of this journal was written in Mao's calligraphy, but this was withdrawn after four issues. On a number of occasions, articles printed in Study and Criticism were later reprinted in Red Flag and People's Daily. The journal quite clearly played a very important role in the anti-Confucius movement.

In September 1973, a forum on criticism of Confucius was called by the radicals, before the question of criticising Confucius had been discussed by the full Politbureau, suggesting that the campaign was decided on by the radicals against the opposition of the rest of the Politbureau members. At the same time, other articles continued to confirm that the movement was initiated and led by Chairman Mao, suggesting that the radicals were at that stage acting under Mao's instructions. The meeting had been called to make organisational arrangements, and afterwards Chiang Ch'ing and Wang Hung-wen began to carry out its decisions,

15. Shih Lun 石倫, "Lun tsun-ju fan-fa" 論尊儒反法 (On Confucian Worship and Anti-Legalism), Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an 學習與批判 (Study and Criticism), 1973, No. 1, pp. 44-52.

16. Shih Shang-hui 史尚學, "Ts'ung 'san-pu-chü' k'an Wang An-shih te fa-chia ssu-hsiang" 從"三不足"看王陽明的法家思想 (An Examination of Wang An-shih's Legalist Thinking in the Light of 'The Three Insufficiencies'), ibid., pp. 59-63.

again without the approval of the full central committee. On January 24th and 25th, 1974, the radicals organised mass rallies in Peking to launch the movement. It is from this date that the attacks on Confucius developed into a full-scale campaign. At these meetings, it was revealed that the materials for criticising Lin Piao and Confucius had been written under the direct concern and concrete guidance of Chiang Ch'ing.¹⁷

While articles written in 1973 had also attacked Lin Piao, they did not particularly single him out as a Confucianist. Rather, he was criticised as one of a number of leaders whose wrong line had been rooted in tradition. Liu Shao-ch'i and Wang Ming were also similarly attacked. At this stage also, there was no mention of Lin Piao having written Confucian scrolls.

By February 1974, the campaign had changed from an anti-Confucian movement to a "criticise Lin, criticise Confucius movement" (p'i-Lin p'i-K'ung yün-tung). Previously, Lin had been criticised by innuendo as a "political swindler like Liu Shao-ch'i" in the "criticise revisionism, rectify style of work" campaign launched soon after his disappearance. It was

17. Tsung ts'an-mou-pu t'ung-hsin-pu ta p'i-p'an-chu 總幹事部
 通信及批判組 "San-chien ch'i-fa' i-tsai ts'uan-
 tang tuo-ch'üan" 三箭齊發 旨在奪取黨權 (The 'Simultaneous
 Discharge of Three Arrows' is Aimed at Usurping Party Leadership
 and Seizing Power), JMJF, 17 January 1977.

not until Chou En-lai denounced him by name at the Tenth Party Congress that Lin's name was publicly linked with this campaign which became the "criticise Lin and rectify the work style" movement.¹⁸ Chou En-lai had at that time made no mention of Lin's reputed Confucianism in his speech, instead implying that Lin's error was a leftist one.¹⁹

Official party identification of Lin Piao as a Confucianist first came in a CCP Central Committee document dated 18 January 1974.²⁰ This document was circulated to all party, military and administrative units for use in their struggle to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius. The material was compiled by Peking and Tsinghua Universities, and contained fifty-four short passages recorded on scrolls and notebooks allegedly written by Lin Piao and his wife and Ch'en Po-ta. This document was used as a basis for a number of later articles which appeared in Red Flag and newspapers, often with several phrases and sentences appearing verbatim without acknowledgement. It would appear that this was the basic text for criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius, and that the evidence in it constituted the sole

18. Chou En-lai, "Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China", Peking Review, 7 September 1973, Nos. 35 and 36, pp. 17-25.

19. Y.M. Kau, The Lin Piao Affair, New York: I.A.S.P., 1975, p. 211.

20. "CCP Central Committee Document: Chung-fa No. 1 (1974)", Issues and Studies, April 1975, Vol. XI, No. 4, pp. 91-114.

evidence for claiming that Lin Piao was a Confucianist. The allegation that Lin Piao and his wife exchanged scrolls in 1969 which stated that "of all things this is the most important: restrain oneself and restore the rites", and hung these above their bed is typical of its content.

The publication of this evidence well over two years after Lin's death raises many questions. If the evidence was real, why did it take two years for it to be discovered? Why hadn't Chou En-lai referred to this at the Ninth Party Congress when he criticised Lin? Why had there been attempts to launch an anti-Confucius movement before the scrolls had been discovered, and indeed before Lin Piao disappeared? Faced with these and many other apparent contradictions, several sinologists have offered alternative explanations for the coupling of Lin Piao's name with Confucius. Parris Chang has suggested that when the anti-Confucius movement began, the radicals had wanted to use it to attack conservatives within the party. By linking it with the dead Lin Piao, the potential targets of attack channelled it into a harmless direction.²¹

Alternatively, some have suggested that the radicals had much to gain by labelling Lin Piao's errors as ultra-right, thus deflecting criticism away from the left. These conjectures basically lie outside the scope of this thesis, which is

21. Parris Chang, "The Anti-Lin Piao and Confucius Campaign: Its Meaning and Purpose", Asian Survey, October 1974, Vol. XIV, No. 10, pp. 871-886.

concerned mainly with the criticisms of Confucius. No doubt the movement existed for a number of different motives and reasons. The fact that Confucius had already been criticised during the Cultural Revolution and in 1969 along similar lines to that of the anti-Confucius movement suggests that the anti-Confucius movement, whatever its political aims in terms of the intra-party struggle, also existed in its own right. While it would be incorrect to seek to explain the anti-Confucius movement without reference to the political struggles, it would be equally mistaken to attempt to explain it, as some writers have done, solely in terms of the political struggle.

The anti-Confucius movement was used for the political purposes of defending the Cultural Revolution and also as a means to launch an attack on Chou En-lai. The central theme of the movement was that of restoration. Those who had been attacked during the Cultural Revolution had begun to be rehabilitated almost immediately after the Cultural Revolution had ended. At the Tenth Party Congress more were rehabilitated, including Teng Hsiao-p'ing. In this the radicals saw a threat to the innovations of the Cultural Revolution, and of course to their own personal positions. The link with defending the Cultural Revolution was made clear in a Red Flag article which stated that

the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius is a political and ideological struggle in the realm of the superstructure ... in this struggle the major question

to be solved is to consolidate and develop the great fruit of the proletarian Cultural Revolution.²²

Another article made it clear that the movement was relevant not just to past struggles,

In order to deepen the mass movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius, it is necessary to associate it with concrete circumstances, namely, major issues of right and wrong in the current class struggle and two-line struggle.²³

Thus, the Chinese themselves were quite explicit in linking the movement with current politics. Nevertheless, an examination of the ideas presented in the movement and the differences of these ideas to those before the Cultural Revolution, which is the main concern of this thesis, is intrinsically interesting and helps to put the movement in a more proper historical perspective.

An aspect of the anti-Confucius movement which is quite new in terms of the actual criticisms of Confucius is the tracing of peasant rebellions and relating them with attacks on Confucianism in history. Many books began to appear which related the many peasant rebellions from Confucius' time to the T'ai-p'ing Uprising in order to show that whenever there was a

22. Ch'ing-hua ta-hsüeh ke-ming wei-yüan-hui 清華大學革命委員會 and Pei-ching ta-hsüeh ke-ming wei-yüan-hui 北京大學革命委員會 "P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung yün-tung t'ui-tung chiao-yü ke-ming shen-ju fa-chan 批林批孔運動推動教育革命深入發展 (The Movement to Criticise Lin Piao and Confucius Pushes the Educational Revolution to Develop in Depth), HC, 1974, No. 5, translation taken from Survey of People's Republic of China Press, 1974, No. 776, pp. 66-72.

23. Red Flag Commentary, "Study Conscientiously and Deepen Criticism", HC, March 1974, translation from Survey of People's Republic of China Press, 1974, No. 771, p. 3.

peasant revolt, one of its objectives was the overthrow of Confucianism. Among the peasant uprisings which were discussed, some, such as Huang Ch'ao's revolt, had been studied before the Cultural Revolution.²⁴ The studies then made no mention of Confucianism in the rebellions. During the seventies, they were reinterpreted as being anti-Confucius in nature.²⁵

The struggle between the Legalists and Confucians became a constant theme in the anti-Confucius movement. The depiction of the Legalists as a complete contrast with the Confucians was another new feature. In the early issues of Study and Criticism, there were more articles on the Legalists and their struggles

24. See for example Lin Yeh-ch'ing 林燦卿, Huang Ch'ao 黃巢, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1962.

25. In fact, in the early stages of the movement, not all peasant rebellions were seen as anti-Confucian in character. As late as 1974, another booklet appeared on the Huang Ch'ao uprising which did not mention that it had been anti-Confucius. See Hou Chung-i 侯忠義, Huang Ch'ao ch'i-i 黃巢起義 (The Huang Ch'ao Uprising), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1974. In later books and articles dealing with peasant uprisings, however, such as that by Yu Chih-shen 余志森, Li-shih shang lao-tung jen-min fan-K'ung tou-cheng shih-hua 歷史上勞動人民反孔鬥爭史話 (Anti-Confucian Struggles by the Labouring People in History), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1975, this rebellion had been reinterpreted as mainly directed against Confucianism. Historical evidence for this new interpretation did not go beyond what had already been listed in the other two books, but previously this evidence had not been taken to imply that the movement was particularly anti-Confucian in character. For example, in the case of Huang Ch'ao, a poem supposedly written by him mentioned the words ch'ung-t'ien (breaking through heaven). The two earlier books did not refer to this poem, but in 1975 these words were interpreted to mean that Huang had challenged the Confucian concept of fate; and had thus been anti-Confucius.

with the Confucians than there were articles concerned exclusively with criticisms of Confucius.²⁶ Likewise, Yang Jung-kuo had written about the struggles between the Legalists and Confucians before he wrote on Confucius. The history of thought was seen more and more in terms of a history of ideological conflict between the Legalists and Confucians. This was carried out to such an extent that some philosophers, whose writings could not possibly have belonged to either school had been reinterpreted to try to argue that they were associated with one school or the other.²⁷

The Legalists were said to have opposed the Confucians in almost every field. Books and articles appeared on the struggle of the Legalists and Confucians in education, in science, language, philosophy and so on.²⁸ As a consequence

26. The number of articles and books written on the struggle between the Confucians and Legalists are too numerous to list here. See for example Ts'ao Ssu-feng 曹思峰, Ju-fa tou-cheng shih-hua 儒法鬥爭史話 (History of the Struggle between the Confucians and Legalists), Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1975.

27. For example, Kung-sun Lung was interpreted as being associated with the Legalist School. Lao Ch'u 勞初, "Ming-chia shih fa-chia te t'ung-meng-ch'un" 名承之法家的同盟軍 (The Nominalist School is An Ally of the Legalist School), Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an, 1975, No. 1, pp. 20-22.

28. See for example Pei-ching shih-fan ta-hsüeh chiao-yü-hsi 北京師範大學教育系 Kuang-tung shih-fan hsüeh-yüan chiao-yü-hsüeh chiao-yen-shih 廣東師範大學教育學教研室 Ho-nan nan-yang ti-ch'u chiao-yü kan-pu hsüeh-hsi-pan 河南南陽地區教育幹部學習班 (ed.), Chiao-yü shih shang te ju-fa tou-cheng kai-k'uang 教育史上的儒法鬥爭概況

of the stress placed on the Legalists, many studies of thinkers like Han Fei, Wang Ch'ung and Wang An-shih who were considered to have been Legalists, were published.²⁹ As well, many selected works written by authors who were presumed to have been Legalists also appeared.³⁰ The anti-Confucius movement therefore in a peculiar way saw the renaissance of a certain stream of classical thought.

Another new feature of the movement was the thoroughness with which Confucius was denounced. This was reflected in the

(continued from p. 195)

(An Outline of the Struggle Between the Confucians and Legalists in the History of Education), Peking: Jen-min chiao-yü ch'u-pan-she, 1975; K'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 科学出版社 (ed.), Ju-fa tou-cheng yü wo-kuo ku-tai k'o-hsüeh chi-shu te fa-chan 儒法斗争与我国古代科学技术的发展 (The Confucian-Legalist Struggle and the Development of Our Country's Ancient Scientific Techniques), Peking: K'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1974, and Wen-tzu kai-ke ch'u-pan-she 文字改革出版社 (ed.), P'ing-fa p'i-ju wen-hsüan - liang chung pu-t'ung te wen-tzu-kuan 评法批儒文选——两种不同的文字观 (Selected Essays on Evaluating the Legalists and Criticising the Confucians - Two Different Outlooks on Literary Writing), Peking: Wen-tzu kai-ke ch'u-pan-she, 1976.

29. Ch'en Ch'i-you 陈奇猷, Han-fei-tzu chi-shih 韩非子集解 (Collected Writings of Han-fei-tzu, with Explanations), 2 vols., Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974; Wang Ch'ung 王充, Lun Heng 论衡, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974, and Wang An-shih 王安石, Wang Wen-kung wen-chi 王文公文集 (Collected Writings of Wang An-shih), 2 vols., Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

30. Some articles have been compiled in Chung-hua shu-ch'u 中华书局 (ed.), Fa-chia chu-tso hsüan-tu 法家著作选读 (Selected Readings of Legalist Writings), Peking: Chung-hua shu-ch'u, 1974.

many books and articles written on different aspects of Confucius which had hitherto either been ignored or thought to be beyond criticism. For example, Confucius' ideas on the arts and music were severely criticised in several books dealing specifically with these topics.³¹ Most of the important articles in this area seem to have been written by Chiang T'ien, possibly a pseudonym for Chiang Ch'ing. The main criticism made was that Confucius had opposed the new Cheng music and supported the Shao music which was said to have been the traditional music of his time, so that even in music he had been opposed to new-born things.³²

As a mass campaign, the anti-Confucius movement had a number of characteristics distinguishing it from earlier communist evaluations of Confucius. It resembled the May Fourth movement in launching an attack on a wide number of areas in which it was believed Confucianism continued to exert a negative influence. This included the organization of family life and the position of women. A great number of the articles were written by representatives of the masses. Women for

31. For example, P'i-p'an Lin Piao yü K'ung-lao-erh te fan-tung wen-i kuan 批判林彪与孔老二的反动文选 (A Criticism of the Reactionary Literary Views of Lin Piao and Confucius), Shantung: Shan-tung jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

32. See the articles, especially those by Chiang T'ien, in Jen-min yin-yüeh ch'u-pan-she 人民音乐出版社 (ed.), P'i-p'an K'ung-lao-erh te fan-tung yin-yüeh ssu-hsiang 批判孔老二的反动音乐思想 (Criticism of Confucius' Reactionary Thinking on Music), Peking: Jen-min yin-yüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1975.

example wrote articles criticising those Confucian ideas that kept women in an oppressed position,³³ peasants who were illiterate in the old society wrote to explain how Confucian ideas of fate and the Confucian idea that those without education are the lowest of society had combined together to keep them oppressed.³⁴ Many articles written by the masses complained that Confucius' ideas of benevolence mouthed by the rulers in the past had been hypocrisy designed to deceive the masses.³⁵ Although the anti-Confucius movement resembled the May Fourth Movement in launching attacks on the practice of Confucianism, this was the first time that articles had been contributed by the masses and not just intellectuals.

While during the fifties and sixties almost all of the articles on Confucius had been written by historians, in the anti-Confucius movement this pattern had changed. The new tendency was for articles to be written by groups and published under pseudonyms. The mass criticism group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities wrote mainly under the name of Liang Hsiao,

33. For example, Chang Ch'in-feng 張親風, "Hsin-chiu she-hui liang-ch'ung t'ien" 新舊社會兩重天 (The New and Old Societies are Two Different Worlds), in Jen-min t'i-yü ch'u-p'an-she 人民體育出版社 (ed.), P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung wen-hsüan 批林批孔文選 (Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius), Peking: Jen-min t'i-yü ch'u-p'an-she, 1974, pp. 292-294.

34. See the articles in ibid., pp. 248-275.

35. See for example Yen Yü-chih 燕玉芝, "K'ung-su K'ung-fu tsui-wu, chieh-ch'üan 'jen-cheng' te fan-tung pan-chih" 控訴孔府罪惡揭穿孔家反動的實質 (Accusations About the Crimes Committed by the K'ung Family, Expose the Reactionary Essence of 'jen government'), ibid., pp. 270-272.

but also used at least a dozen other names including Pei Ching, Kao Lu and Liang Hsiao-chuang. A Shanghai-based group, possibly attached to Fudan University, wrote under the pseudonym of Lo Ssu-ting and K'ang Li. Other pseudonyms have not yet been revealed, T'ang Hsiao and T'ang Hsiao-wen may refer to the party school. Names like Hsin Wu are obviously hononyms for hsin wu, new things, but the identity of the writers still remains a mystery. Top party leaders possibly also wrote under pseudonyms.

A number of historians though, did continue to write. Of the old historians, Yang Jung-kuo, Feng Yu-lan and Chao Chi-pin were the most contributors. After his initial article on periodisation, Kuo Mo-jo does not seem to have contributed any more, possibly because of bad health, although his health now seems to have recovered with the downfall of "the gang of four." The younger Marxist historians like Kuan Feng who had written important articles in the sixties were mainly in disgrace because of their associations with the May 16 group during the Cultural Revolution. Some prominent historians had been purged during the Cultural Revolution, while others like Fan Wen-lan had died.

Besides the journal Study and Criticism which was launched in Shanghai, the Peking University Journal and Historical Research also resumed publication to contribute to the campaign. In 1972, the two journals Archaeology and Cultural Relics had

already reappeared, and their pages later included many articles in support of the Movement.

A good example of the use of archaeological finds to bolster the movement was the discovery of bamboo scrolls in two Han tombs at Yin Ch'üeh Shan in 1972. The scrolls included mainly Sun Wu and Sun Pin's military texts and other military and scientific texts, but no Confucian writings.³⁶ The interpretation placed on the finds was that it was incorrect to argue that Ch'in Shih Huang had attempted to destroy Chinese culture in his burning of books. He had in fact only burned Confucian texts, and preserved useful books such as the military scrolls. This was considered a progressive action, and archaeological finds showed that this new interpretation was valid.³⁷

The anti-Confucius movement was the largest mass movement since the end of the Cultural Revolution. It was carried out

36. See Shan-tung-sheng po-wu-kuan 山東省博物館 and Lin-i wen-wu-tsu 臨沂文物總局, "Shan-tung Lin-i hsi-Han mu fa-hsien 'Sun-tzu ping-fa' ho 'Sun Pin ping-fa' teng chu-chien te chien-pao" 山東臨沂西漢墓發現《孫子兵法》和《孫臏兵法》等竹簡的簡報 (A Brief Report of the Discovery of 'Sun-tzu's Military Arts' and 'Sun Pin's Military Arts' in the Bamboo Scrolls from the Han Tombs at Lin-i, Shantung), Wen wu 文物 (Cultural Relics), 1974, No. 2, pp. 15-26.

37. Wei Chin 衛金, "Ts'ung Yin Ch'üeh Shan chu-chien k'an Ch'in Shih Huang fan-shu" 從銀雀山竹簡看秦始皇焚書 (An Examination of Ch'in Shih Huang's Burning of Books in the Light of the Yin Ch'üeh Shan Bamboo Scrolls), HQ, 1974, No. 7, pp. 62-66.

by all sections of society. Mass meetings were held, wall posters put up and poems and songs of criticism were composed.³⁸ Exhibitions were also held. Teachers and students of history were encouraged to give lectures to workers and peasants, those at Peking University alone were reported to have given lectures to over half a million people.³⁹ Study classes and political evening schools were also organised to criticise Confucius.

The movement was at its peak in the first half of 1974. Although it still continued to be very active in the second half of 1974, a Central Committee directive issued in 1 July 1974 led to the movement being toned down. This directive warned against activities which went beyond that of a study movement. It stated that some people were engaging in cross-area exchange of experience, establishing mountain strongholds and fighting civil wars, describing what they did as revolutionary acts of going against the tide. The idea that rebelling against the leadership was going against the tide was criticised. Criticism of Lin Piao

38. P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung chan-ke 批林批孔戰歌 (Battle Hymns of Criticisms of Lin Piao and Confucius), Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1974, and P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung erh-ke hstian 批林批孔兒歌選 (A Selection of Children's Songs Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius), Peking: Jen-min chiao-yü ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

39. Chu Ch'ing-hua ta-hsüeh, Pei-ching ta-hsüeh kung-jen, chieh-fang-chün Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang hstian-ch'uan tui 紅衛兵 大學、北京大學、人民解放軍毛澤東思想宣傳隊 "Shen-ju p'i-Lin p'i-K'ung, yung Ma-ke-ssu chu-i chan-ling chiao-yü chen-ti" 深入批林批孔，用馬克思主義佔領教育陣地 (Deepen the Criticisms of Lin Piao and Confucius, Use Marxism to Take Control of the Educational Field), KMJP, 27 July 1974.

and Confucius was also to be linked to production.⁴⁰

The anti-Confucius movement continued until February 1975 when it was replaced by a new campaign launched by Mao to criticise bourgeois rights. This campaign was followed by the campaign to criticise the Water Margin in September 1975, and the education debate which began in November 1975 and was broadened into an attack on the "right deviationist wind" in early 1976. The chief target of the latter campaign was Teng Hsiao-p'ing who had disappeared from public view after the eulogy at the memorial service for Chou En-lai on 15 January 1976.

Criticism of Confucius again started in 1976, after Mao had issued another directive to criticise Confucius. In February 1976 the mass criticism group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities published an article "More on That Man Confucius". Articles criticising Confucius continued to appear sporadically through the rest of 1976. The general orientation of the interpretations, however, had not changed. New evaluations, particularly of the movement itself, only emerged after the arrest of the "gang of four".

40. "CCP Central Committee Document: Chung-fa No. 21 (1974)", Issues and Studies, January 1975, Vol. XI, No. 1, pp. 101-104.

Confucius and Class

Although very little was written directly on Confucius during the Cultural Revolution, the emphasis it placed on a class analysis of historical issues meant that later discussions on Confucius would be very different from those of the early sixties. In a concluding note to their denunciations of the Shantung Forum on Confucius in 1962, the Ching kangshan Combat Group of Red Guards had declared that

The relationship between slave-owners and slaves, between landlords and peasants, capitalists and workers are those of the exploiters and exploited. The struggle between them is a life and death struggle, absolutely devoid of 'mutual love' and 'mutual embrace'.⁴¹

While the Red Guards who wrote this to denounce Chou Yang and scholars in the early sixties who had written on Confucius did not themselves carry out a thorough class analysis of Confucius what they wrote indicated that there would be no compromise on the question of class analysis. In 1969, not long after the Cultural Revolution, Shih Fan-hsiu (a pseudonym which can be translated as "History as a Means to Oppose Revisionism") wrote an article relating the "ghost of Confucius' Shop" to "actual class struggle". In this article, Confucius was identified as a member of the class of slave-owners,

41. Pei-ching shih-fan ta-hsüeh Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang hung-wei-ping ching-kang-shan chan-tou-t'uan 北京師範大學毛澤東思想紅衛兵開國大武鬥團 "K'ung-tzu t'ao-lun hui shih niu-kuei she-shen hsiang tang chin-kung te hei-hui" 孔子討論會是千鬼蛇神向黨進攻的惡會 (The 'Forum on Confucius' was a Black Session of Monsters and Demons for Attacking the Party), and "Niu-kuei she-shen tsai K'ung-tzu t'ao-lun hui shang fang-le hsieh shen-mo tu" 千鬼蛇神在「孔子討論會」上放了些惡魔毒! (What Poisons Were Spread by the Monsters and Demons at the 'Forum on Confucius?'), JMJP, 10 January 1967.

an ardent champion of China's ancient slave system and faithful spokesman of the slave-owner class, he was not reconciled to the decline of the slave system and deeply yearned for the Shang and Chou dynasties, the prime period of the slave system. Both his philosophical and political thinking were reactionary, supporting the slave system.⁴²

Besides insisting that Confucius' class membership and class stand were that of the slave-owners, this article differs from the pre-Cultural Revolution assessments in stating that Confucius' ideology was still related directly to the actual class struggles of today. The article analysed the controversy over Confucianism during the May Fourth period to argue that "the exploiting classes and their representatives have never ceased unleashing wild counter-attacks. They stubbornly defended the Confucius shop and tried hard to summon its departed spirit."⁴³ In the same year as this article was written, a pamphlet quoting pro-Confucius statements by the "reactionaries and scholars of the landlord-bourgeois class" since the May Fourth Movement was published.⁴⁴ In keeping with historical analysis of the Cultural

42. Shih Fan-hsiu 史及竹, "K'ung-chia-tien te yu-ling yu hsien-shih te chieh-chi tou-cheng" 孔家店的幽靈與現實階級鬥爭 (Ghost of Confucius' Shop and Actual Class Struggle), HC, 1969, Nos. 6 and 7, translated in Peking Review, 12 December 1969, No. 50, pp. 18-21.

43. Ibid., p. 18.

44. Wu-ssu i-lai fan-tung p'ai, ti-chu tzu-ch'an chieh-chi hatleh-che tsun-K'ung fu-ku yen-lun chi-lu 五四以來文藝動向、地質、五回以來文藝動向、地質、五四以來文藝動向、地質、五四以來文藝動向、地質 (Confucius Worship and Restoring the Past by Reactionary Scholars of the Landlord-Bourgeois Class Since May Fourth), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1974.

Revolution, Confucius has been "juxtaposed" so that the kind of role he played in history is seen to be played by "reactionaries" today.⁴⁵

In 1971 another major article, this time on Confucius' thinking on education, was published. In this, Confucius was said to have

lived at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, when class struggle was very intense. The basic social contradiction of the time was the class antagonism between slave-owners and slaves. Resistance by the slaves shook the rule of the slave-owners to its very foundation, and aggravated the contradiction and disintegration within the ruling class. The result was the irrevocable decline of slavery.⁴⁶

Again, Confucius was seen to have represented the interests of the declining slave-owning aristocracy.

Although these two articles appearing before the anti-Confucius movement itself can be seen as forerunners of arguments put forward during the movement itself, earlier books giving alternative interpretations were still available at the time, suggesting that agreement had not yet been reached on this question. Wang Gungwu has noted that as late as September 1973 Fan Wen-lan's general history of China was still readily

45. This term is used by Wang Gungwu, "Juxtaposing Past and Present in China Today", China Quarterly, 1975, No. 61, pp. 1-24.

46. The Writing Group of the Shantung Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "P'i-p'an K'ung Ch'iu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang" 批判孔丘的教育思想 (A Criticism of Confucius' Thinking on Education), JMJP, 19 July 1971. Translation from Peking Review, 17 September 1971, No. 38, p. 6.

available.⁴⁷ In this work, he had argued that the Chou Dynasty was already feudal. After 1974, when the anti-Confucius campaign officially began this book was no longer available.

In July 1972, Kuo Mo-jo restated his 1950 views on periodisation in an article published in Red Flag. Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation was to be accepted by all historians during the anti-Confucius movement. Although this article was relatively short and Kuo Mo-jo did not add any new evidence to it, there are several significant differences between this and his arguments in the fifties. In his earlier article "Slave Society", there were positive references to Confucius and none to Ch'in Shih-huang.⁴⁸ The later article did not discuss the role played by Confucius but claimed that

swindlers like Liu Shao-ch'i attack Ch'in Shih-huang as a way of attacking the revolution. This kind of viewpoint is a reactionary one which impedes the progress of history.⁴⁹

Before 1949, Kuo Mo-jo had used Engels' anthropological approach to the question of periodisation. After 1949, he had quoted

47. Wang Gungwu, "'Burning Books and Burying Scholars Alive': Some Recent Interpretations Concerning Ch'in Shih-huang", Papers On Far Eastern History, March 1974, No. 9, p. 143.

48. Kuo Mo-jo, "Nu-li chih shih-tai" 奴隶制时代 (Slave Society), in Nu-li chih shih-tai, 2nd edn., Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1973, pp. 14-75.

49. Kuo Mo-jo, "Chung-kuo ku-tai-shih te fen-ch'i wen-t'i".

Stalin's criteria, and began to stress the archaeological finds of slave burials in assessing slave society. In the 1972 article, Kuo claimed that the criterion for his 1950 periodisation had been decided upon according to the guidance of Mao's method of contradiction. He quoted Mao

In studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved.⁵⁰

It should be noted here that while Kuo Mo-jo insisted that

in the past we did not follow Chairman Mao's directive and so we have gone into many winding paths, when I wrote "Slave Society" I consciously followed the path directed by Chairman Mao.⁵¹

After the appearance of Kuo Mo-jo's article, later reprinted as a preface to a new edition of his book Slave Society, the periodisation debate on ancient Chinese history had come to a close, at least for the present. After that, no other periodisation scheme was proposed. In 1973, when a series of booklets were published on the nature of societies of the primitive, slave and feudal periods, the booklet Slave Society, which was a revised version of a 1964 edition, took Kuo Mo-jo's

50. Translation from Mao Tse-tung, "On Contradiction", Mao Tse-tung, Four Essays on Philosophy, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968, p. 53.

51. Kuo Mo-jo, "Chung-kuo ku-tai shih te fen-ch'i wen-t'i", p. 57.

periodisation for ancient China for granted.⁵² The 1964 version of this booklet had stated that since the periodisation debate was not resolved, it was not possible to date the end of the slave era in China. Books and articles which appeared after Kuo Mo-jo's 1972 article all adopted his periodisation scheme. The anti-Confucius movement thus had one basic periodisation scheme as a framework to work in, a very different situation to that which existed before the Cultural Revolution. As a result, for the first time there was unity amongst those historians who published articles on the question of Confucius' class background.

The use of Mao's formulation of the principle of contradiction was also important. In the fifties, one of the most difficult problems in determining when China had reached the end of the slave period was the existence of slaves in large or small numbers right into the present time. For example, the existence of slaves in some national minorities was still evident after the Communists had assumed power in Peking.⁵³ Now, it could be argued that the existence of these slaves is not the principal contradiction within Chinese society.

52. Shih Hsing 史興, Nu-li she-hui, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1973. He also wrote booklets on the nature of primitive society and feudal society.

53. See Alan Winington, The Slaves of the Cool Mountains: The Ancient Social Conditions and Changes Now in Progress on the Remote South-Western Borders of China, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1959.

At the end of the Chou Dynasty, however, the principal contradiction was between the slaves and slave-owners. Thus, the existence of slaves in a society need not mean that particular society is a slave one.

In terms of Confucius' class outlook, there is a further advantage in saying that he lived in a transition period between a slave and feudal period. Had he lived in the middle of the slave society, there would presumably have been two dominant classes in existence: the slaves and slave-owners. A period of transition, however, implied that a new and important class was emerging. This class according to the Stalinist periodisation scheme ought to be the landlord class. The ideology of this new class was to provide a sharp contrast to that of Confucius.

Yang Jung-kuo analysed the ideological struggles of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period in an article published four months after Kuo Mo-jo's article. Both articles appeared in Red Flag. Yang Jung-kuo began with a statement affirming Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation:

Yin and Chou were slave societies. This kind of society continued to develop until the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period, which was an era when the slave system was rapidly being transformed into a feudal system.⁵⁴

54. Yang Jung-kuo, "Ch'un-ch'iu chan-kuo shih-ch'i ssu-hsiang ling-yü nei liang-t'iao lu-hsien te tou-cheng" 春秋戰國時期是封建領域內兩條路線的鬥爭 (The Two-line Struggle in the Ideological Sphere of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period), HC, 1972, No. 12, p. 45.

Yang quoted several incidents from such classical texts as the Tso-chuan to illustrate that slaves were at that time rebelling against the slave-owners in large numbers. One of his examples, to be referred to over and over again in the anti-Confucius movement, was that of the bandit Chih, who was said to have had several thousand men under him during an uprising he led in the state of Ch'in. Yang Jung-kuo argued that the landownerships and modes of production had changed rapidly. Slaves became serfs who sold their services to the newly-arisen landlord class, so that

in this transition period, there was the struggle by the slaves to gain liberation, and the emergence of the newly-arisen (feudal) forces. These things occurred together, and continually attacked the slave-owning class The representative thinkers of the declining slave-owning class were the Confucians Confucius, Tzu Ssu, and Mencius. The representatives of the thinking of the newly-arisen landlord class were the Legalists Shang Yang, Han-fei-tzu and so on.⁵⁵

In analysing the antagonistic ideologies of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period in this way, Yang Jung-kuo was able to sidestep the question of who had represented the thinking of the slaves. The principal contradiction was thus taken to be that between the Confucians and the Legalists. This was a new line of argument which was to become a central theme of the anti-Confucius movement.

55. Ibid., p. 46.

While Yang Jung-kuo only gave a brief treatment of these topics in this article, the questions he raised and the kind of analysis he made, were to a large extent taken as guidelines over the next two years. These issues included Confucius' opposition to the inscription of legal codes on tripods, the execution of Shao-cheng Mao, the way Confucius used jen to support the slave system and the idealist nature of his philosophy. While many of these topics had been discussed before the Cultural Revolution, interpretations had been quite different. The interpretations given during the anti-Confucius movement were basically to be elaborations of Yang's ideas.

The first post-Cultural Revolution study concentrating on Confucius himself was also written by Yang Jung-kuo. "Confucius - a Thinker who Stubbornly Supported the Slave System", was published in August 1973. Instead of beginning by outlining Confucius' family background and the historical background as was commonly done before the Cultural Revolution, Yang Jung-kuo began by asking:

What manner of man was Confucius, who was revered by China's reactionary ruling class as 'the sage' for more than 2000 years? Lenin pointed out: 'The categorical requirement of Marxist theory in investigating any social question is that it be examined within definite historical limits.' To analyse Confucius from the historical-materialist viewpoint, one must put him in the context of the class struggle of his time and see which class viewpoint he took and which class his ideology served.⁵⁶

56. Yang Jung-kuo, "K'ung-tzu - wan-ku ti wei-hu nu-li-chih te ssu-hsiang chia" 孔子——顽固地维护奴隶制的思想家 (Confucius - a Thinker Who Stubbornly Supported the Slave System), JMJF, 7 August 1973. Translated in Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 1, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1974, pp. 1-23, p. 1.

This introduction shows how influential the emphasis on class struggle and class analysis made during the Cultural Revolution had been. Yang illustrated his argument that Confucius had stood on the side of the slave-owning class with several examples. First of all, the landownership of Confucius time had passed gradually from the princes to the lesser lords, creating the feudal system. In the state of Lu, the three families Chi-sun, Meng-sun, and Shu-sun represented the newly-arisen feudal forces. Confucius had taken

the view that the three families, being slave-owners and senior officials, had overstepped their authority and were undermining the traditional slave system that had existed since the Yin (also known as the Shang) Dynasty. How could this be tolerated? Therefore, he did all in his power to weaken the influence of the three families so as to uphold the rule of the slave-owning primary household of the state of Lu.⁵⁷

He also discussed Confucius' opposition to the inscription of legal codes onto tripods. He argued that before the time of Confucius, rule by the slave-owners had been one of "rule by rites", but because many slaves were no longer obedient to these rites and were rebelling against them, some of the more progressive slave-owners drew up articles of law which were inscribed onto tripods. Confucius was opposed to this because such conduct would eliminate all the differences between the higher and lower classes, making it difficult for a state under a slave system to maintain itself.⁵⁸

57. Ibid., p. 5.

58. Ibid., p. 7.

Although some of the examples cited by Yang had already been discussed in the sixties, the issue of the execution of Shao-cheng Mao was basically a new one. In the past there had been some doubt as to whether this incident had actually occurred. By the seventies, however, it was a crucial pillar supporting the argument that Confucius had carried out violent oppression when he had come to power. In contrast, before the Cultural Revolution, there had been no suggestion that Confucius had used force to rule.⁵⁹ The attention given to the problem of Shao-cheng Mao shows how far interpretations had departed from the traditional one of Confucius as a benevolent sage.

The question of Shao-cheng Mao was taken up by Chao Chi-pin, another consistent critic of Confucius. His study of the execution of Shao-cheng Mao, like all his other writings, is detailed and sophisticated. He used all the major historical writings on this incident to argue that Shao-cheng Mao had been executed by Confucius although this had not stopped the reformist trend which Shao-cheng Mao represented.⁶⁰ He also examined each of the five crimes which Shao-cheng Mao was accused of, arguing against the traditional interpretation that Shao-cheng Mao had been teaching falsehoods.

59. Yang Jung-kuo mentioned it in his earlier book, but on the whole, this incident was ignored.

60. Chao Chi-pin, Kuan-yü K'ung-tzu chu Shao-cheng Mao wen-t'i (On the Question of the Execution of Shao-cheng Mao by Confucius), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1973.

The importance attached to this incident was reflected in the publication of a simplified version of Chao Chi-pin's book.⁶¹ As well, only one month after Chao's book appeared, Kao Heng wrote an article in Kuang-ming Daily which summarised Chao's arguments even further making his conclusions available to a wider section of the populace.⁶² Kao argued that

Confucius killed Shao-cheng Mao not only because Shao-cheng Mao had opposed his political line, but also Shao had obstructed his future.

Evidence was drawn from references in Hsün-tzu and Lun Heng which claimed that when Shao-cheng Mao taught, he drew away all Confucius' students except Yen Hui.

Chao Chi-pin also argued that Shao-cheng Mao had represented the newly-arisen landlord class. Together with the Mohists and the Legalists, these representatives of the newly-arisen landlord class were said to have split off from the Confucian school. This fits in with traditional evaluations, but Chao also argued that

The above statement that the Legalists had split off from the Confucian school cannot be explained in terms of the 'teacher-student causal relationship (where the students diverged from their teacher).' It is the dialectical law of 'one dividing into two' of the development of a school of thought, that is, it is an old thing which internally produces a self-negating new-born thing.⁶³

61. Chao Chi-pin, Kuan-yü K'ung Ch'iu sha Shao-cheng Mao wen-t'i (On the Question of Confucius' Killing of Shao-cheng Mao), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1974.

62. Kao Heng 高亨, "Lun K'ung-tzu sha Shao-cheng Mao" (On Confucius' Killing of Shao-cheng Mao), KMJP, 31 October 1973.

63. Chao Chi-pin, Kuan-yü K'ung-ch'iu sha Shao-cheng Mao wen-t'i, p. 43.

As the anti-Confucius movement progressed, there was more discussion on the role of the masses in history. In the fifties and sixties attempts to show that the slave-owning classes were collapsing used the example of the uprising led by Chih. There was then, however, no discussion of the ideology of Chih, who was referred to as "Bandit Chih". During the anti-Confucius campaign, Chih was referred to many times to argue that

the working people have always hated Confucius bitterly, held him in contempt and sternly refuted and criticised his reactionary preachments (sic).⁶⁴

T'ang Hsiao-wen referred to the account of Chih's encounter with Confucius in Chuang-tzu in an attempt to prove that while "Confucius, who stubbornly upheld the slave system, was full of implacable hatred for Liuhsia Chih," on the other hand,

Taking the revolutionary stand of resistance to slave-owner oppression, Liuhsia Chih considered it entirely just for the slaves to rise in rebellion and wrest back the wealth they had created from the hands of the slave-owning aristocrats. On the basis of the slaves' experience in their struggle, he gave new interpretations to such moral concepts as courage, righteousness, wisdom and benevolence. He explained: When the slaves went into battle against the nobles, courage meant fearlessness of death and being in the van of the charge; during retreat, righteousness meant staying in the rear to cover the withdrawal; wisdom meant being good at analysing situations and seizing the opportune moment for battle; and benevolence meant sharing equally what was captured. In the course of his criticism of Confucius' concepts of 'filial piety and brotherly duty', this outstanding leader of the slave uprising was the first man in Chinese history to put forth real life the moral standards of

64. T'ang Hsiao-wen, "Liuhsia Chih Denounces Confucius", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 2, p. 205.

the slave class, diametrically opposed to those of the slave-owning class.⁶⁵

While some of the examples used to illustrate the clashes between the different classes in Confucius' time had seldom been discussed before the Cultural Revolution, many of the examples used in the sixties to argue that Confucius had stood on the side of the slave-owning class were also referred to again. Confucius' willingness to assist the rebel Kung-shan Pu-jao, which in the fifties and sixties had occasionally also been quoted as an example to show that Confucius was prepared to join a rebellion to topple the slave-owning class, was now interpreted along the lines proposed by Kuan Feng in the sixties. It was argued that

Kung-shan Pu-jao took the city Fei and organised forces in an attempt to take the Chi family's power, and he made preparations for a coup d'etat in order to overthrow the newly-arisen landlord class such as Chi-huan tzu.⁶⁶

The fact that Confucius was a member of an aristocratic family which was already declining by his time was also elaborated upon. The ancestor of Confucius was said to have been "a slave-owning aristocrat who was immersed in sin and crime."⁶⁷ Besides these investigations into the class background of Confucius ancestors, his descendants were also accused of

65. Ibid., p. 209, and pp. 215-216.

66. Hung Kuang-ssu 洪廣思, K'ung Ch'iu fan-tung te i-sheng (The Reactionary Life of Confucius), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1974, p. 51.

67. Ibid., p. 3.

oppressing the masses in The K'ung Ancestral Home is Immersed in Sin and Crime.⁶⁸ The exploitation waged by the descendants of Confucius in Shangtung was said to have ended only in 1949.

In an influential article written by the Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, the identification of Confucius with current political figures was both implicitly and explicitly pointed to:

Confucius was an outwardly stubborn and ferocious but inwardly extremely weak and empty man; he was sinister, cunning and rotten to the core. This was the nature of the declining slave-owning class he represented - it is a feature common to representatives of all reactionary classes on the verge of extinction. Thorough exposure of Confucius' reactionary features is of great significance today for the thorough unmasking of such political swindlers as Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao and for hitting back at the adverse current of retrogression and restoration.⁶⁹

The relevance of criticising Confucius for present day politics invariably prefaced discussions on him. As well as this, articles and books with titles such as Confucius, 'Sage' of the Reactionary Classes began to appear.⁷⁰ Confucius was therefore seen as a supporter of all reactionary classes and

68. Shan-tung ta-hstleh li-shih hsi, ch'u-fu shih-fan hstleh-yüan li-shih hsi K'ung-fu tsui-o t'iao-ch'a tsu 山東大學歷史系四年師範學院歷史系孔府罪惡調查記 (The K'ung Ancestral Home is Immersed in Sin and Crime), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an she, 1974. Tsui-o lei-lei te K'ung-fu

69. The Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, "Confucius - What Kind of Man Was He?", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 2, p. 1.

70. Yang Jung-kuo, Confucius, 'Sage' of the Reactionary Classes, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1974.

not merely a supporter of the slave-owning class. The debate on Confucius was taken out of an academic context and placed in one that dealt with contemporary realities and "line struggle".

Feng Yu-lan, who during the movement made several criticisms of his previous assessments of Confucius, summarized opinion then current when he claimed that the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period was, like the present era, a period of transition.⁷¹ Just as Confucius had at that time advocated the ideology of the old slave-owning class and tried to undermine the foundations of the newly-arisen feudal society, so the reactionary forces and their representatives in the Party like Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao had repeatedly praised Confucius and attempted to restore capitalism and tried to undermine socialism.

This was in imitation of Confucius. The times are different, but it is the same revive the old, retrogressive line. Their spirits are one, and their aims are the same.⁷²

Confucius and Ethics

While in the fifties and early sixties there were still some who attempted to analyse Confucius' philosophical outlook without referring to its political implications, after the Cultural Revolution, however, no aspect of his thinking was

71. See for example his article "A Criticism of Confucius and Self-criticism of My Own Past Veneration for Confucius", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 1, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1974, pp. 88-106.

72. Feng Yu-lan, Lun K'ung Ch'iu 論孔子 (On Confucius), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1975, p. 19.

examined apart from a consideration of its political implications for both his own time and the present. In the study of his metaphysics, for example, it was now not enough merely to argue that he had been a materialist or idealist as in the fifties and sixties, when the implication that being a materialist was more progressive than being idealist was many times left unstated. Now, Confucius was considered at every turn to have been an idealist, and the implications of this were elaborated on in great detail. Since Confucius did not make direct references to the existence of matter or ideas, it was difficult to demonstrate whether he had been idealist or materialist. The comments he had made about the universe and spirits were the only indicators of his view of the nature of the world, and deductions were made from this to ascertain his metaphysical standpoint. The quote from the Analects "Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being reproduced, but does Heaven say anything?"⁷³ was often used before the Cultural Revolution to demonstrate that Confucius did not believe in a god and consequently could be said to be something of a materialist who accepted the natural world as it was without reference to the intervention of a supernatural being. During the anti-Confucius movement, however, this same quote was

73. Legge, p. 266.

interpreted to mean that although Heaven (i.e., God) does not speak, everything in the world follows His will. This was taken to show that even without giving directions, the universe moves according to the will of Heaven which was a supernatural being.⁷⁴ Therefore, Confucius had said that man must observe the regulations of Heaven, since "He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray."⁷⁵

It was argued that Confucius had gone beyond the material world in his attempts to explain the workings of natural phenomena, and was thus an idealist. Yang Jung-kuo contended that starting from an idealist position, Confucius had propagated the concept of the will of Heaven, and the idea that human affairs were pre-ordained with political matters being decided by the will of Heaven. Confucius had used this kind of idealism to try to make the slaves believe in fate, and to discourage them from any attempts to change the world.

Comments from the Analects which directly showed that Confucius believed in fate were even more strongly attacked. Tzu Hsia's assertion that "Death and life have their determined appointment; riches and honors depend upon Heaven"⁷⁶ was interpreted as an idealist theory which

74. Yang Jung-kuo, Chien-ming chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih
 简明中国哲学史 (A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy),
 Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an she, 1973, p. 25.

75. Legge, p. 31.

76. Legge, p. 160.

wanted people to believe that the ruling position of the slave-owning class had been arranged by 'Old Heaven', and cannot be changed; that the bloody rule the slaves suffer under the slave-owners were determined by 'fate', and cannot be resisted.⁷⁷

Thus, by adopting an idealist standpoint, Confucius was said to have caused the labouring people to suffer and to have discouraged them from knowing the reasons for their suffering. The question of Confucius' metaphysics meant much more than merely whether or not he was an idealist. Like everything else, it is closely related to his class stance, with proofs of his idealism being subordinated to proofs of his reactionary nature.

Confucius' epistemology was also discussed. Before the Cultural Revolution, attempts had been made to show that Confucius had believed that knowledge came from practice, using as evidence such quotes from the Analects as "learn with a constant perseverance and application."⁷⁸

In saying that Confucius had preached the will of Heaven, however, it was now argued that since he believed Heaven controlled everything, he also thought that it controlled man's intellect and his capacity to learn. Confucius' statement "Heaven has endowed me with virtue" has been taken to mean that he believed

77. Shang-kang wu-ch'ang erh-ch'e-chien kung-jen li-lun hsüeh-hsi
hsiao-tsu 上海五廠二事間工人理論學習小組 Lun-yü hsüan-p'i
《論語》集批 (Selected Criticisms of the Analects), Shanghai:
Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1975, p. 8.

78. Legge, p. 1.

he was born with this quality.⁷⁹ In the same way, sayings such as

Those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so, readily, get possession of knowledge, are the next. Those who are dull and stupid, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these. As to those who are dull and stupid and yet do not learn; they are the lowest of the people.⁸⁰

and "there are only the wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest class, who cannot be changed"⁸¹ have often been quoted as evidence to show that Confucius really believed that in the world there were several classes of men, one of which were born with knowledge.⁸² These statements were easily taken to imply that Confucius had believed in innate knowledge. He had, however, made several contradictory statements. The statement "learn with a constant perseverance and application" was in the seventies interpreted as meaning "learn (the rites, music, the Book of Poetry, and the Book of History) with a

79. Pei-ching ta-hsüeh che-hsüeh-hsi i-chiu ch'i-ling chi kung-nung-ping hsüeh-yüan 北京大學哲學系一九七〇級工農兵學員
Lun-yü p'i-chu 《論語》批註 (Annotated Analects with Criticisms), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1974, p. 156.

80. Legge, p. 247.

81. Legge, p. 255.

82. See the annotations in Pei-ching ta-hsüeh chung-wen-hsi ku-tian wen-hsien chuan-yeh 北京大學中文系古典文獻專業
K'ung Ch'iu fan-tung ssu-hsiang tsu-liao p'i-chu 孔丘反動思想
資料批註 (Source Material on the Reactionary Thinking of Confucius with Critical Annotations), Peking: Chung-hua shu-chu, 1974, pp. 75-82.

constant perseverance and application."⁸³ This would no longer imply that Confucius' conception of knowledge was materialist but would simply consider it as advice he gave to his students on studying the Chou rites and the classics. Similarly, other statements which in the fifties and sixties had been interpreted as if they showed a similarity to the epistemological principles Mao had outlined in On Practice were now reinterpreted in the framework of Confucius' class stance and his entire philosophical scheme. Thus "learning without thought is labour; thought without learning is perilous" has been translated by the Peking University Philosophy Department into modern Chinese as meaning

Learning (the rites, music, Book of Poetry, Book of History) with no reflection would lead to the dangerous path (of turning away from the Chou rites).⁸⁴

Confucius had also made statements as "Am I indeed possessed of knowledge? I am not knowing"⁸⁵ and

I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.⁸⁶

These statements provide difficulties for the theory that Confucius believed in innate knowledge, even if it is granted that by

83. Pei-ching ta-hsüeh che-hsüeh-hsi i-chiu ch'i-ling chi kung-nung-ping hsüeh-yüan, Lun-yü p'i-chu, pp. 1-2.

84. Ibid., p. 35.

85. Legge, p. 87 and p. 111.

86. Ibid.

knowledge Confucius had meant the slave society rites. In the Annotated Analects with Criticisms, such statements are usually taken to mean that Confucius had deliberately lied,⁸⁷ a rather weak argument on the part of his critics. This underlies the fact that the Analects is full of contradictory statements and that in order to evaluate any statement in it, the present critics found it necessary to take the whole thought and life of Confucius into consideration. Whether the criticisms made during the anti-Confucius campaign were valid or not, they have definitely taken this into account more so than the fifties and sixties.⁸⁸

While attention was paid to Confucius' metaphysical and epistemological outlook, the main concern in discussing his philosophical view was still with ethics. The central question in Confucius' ethics was still considered to be jen, with many articles and books being devoted to this concept.

The use of class analysis was considered essential in analysing jen. One of the most widely used definitions of jen is that of "love men (ai jen).". T'ang Hsiao-wen made the same distinction between jen and min as Chao Chi-pin had made some twenty years earlier, arguing that jen meant the class of

87. Pei-ching ta-hsüeh che-hsüeh-hsi i-chiu ch'i-ling chi kung-nung-ping hsüeh-yüan, Lun-yü p'i-chu, p. 152.

88. There are many booklets written during the anti-Confucius campaign, for example, in which the whole life of Confucius is traced as well as discussions of his philosophy are outlined. Feng Yu-lan's Lun K'ung Ch'iu is an example.

slave-owners while min referred to the class of slaves.⁸⁹
 Thus jen as "love men" was said to mean in modern language
 "love the class of slave-owners."

While Chao Chi-pin's name had not been mentioned when discussing this topic,⁹⁰ the underlying assumption was that jen (men) meant the class of slave-owners. This argument was supported, however, mostly by historical examples rather than semantic analysis. On the whole, rather than trying to prove that jen did not mean benevolence, most writers analysed Confucius' behaviour to argue that he had been a hypocrite who, when he spoke of jen, did not really want benevolence. The Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, for example, argued that

He (Confucius) habitually spoke of benevolence and righteousness, preached the doctrine of the mean and would not shoot birds in their nests or fish with a long line bearing too many hooks. He put on the appearance of loving not only people but even birds and fish. Actually he was a hard-hearted and ferocious demon. Once, with a pretence of benevolence, a disciple of his handed out some porridge for the toiling slaves. Regarding this as an offence against the 'rites of Chou', Confucius flew into a rage and immediately sent people to break the pot and bowls and spill the porridge on the ground. This was an example of Confucius' 'the benevolent man loves others.' He was a hypocrite!⁹¹

89. T'ang Hsiao-wen, "Was Confucius 'an Educator of the Whole People'?", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 1, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1974, p. 70.

90. A new edition of Chao Chi-pin's Lun-yü hsin-t'an, however, was published in February 1976, when the anti-Confucius movement was already winding down.

91. The Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, "Confucius - What Kind of Man Was He?", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 2, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975, p. 7.

In another article, they stated that Confucius had talked about 'benevolence' as if it could be separated from the class character of man, arguing that he had used jen as a means to lessen class antagonisms.⁹² In quoting historical examples, they referred to Confucius having commended the killing of slaves as excellent, and his execution of Shao-cheng Mao soon after he had come to office. It was claimed that when he had talked of love, Confucius had not meant to love everyone, but only to love a handful of slave-owning exploiters.⁹³

If jen (men) is restricted to meaning the class of slave-owners, the seemingly progressive nature of a number of statements made by Confucius could be explained as a result of misinterpretation throughout the centuries. One statement which had been commonly used before the Cultural Revolution to show that Confucius had been both considerate and progressive was his definition of jen as "not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself."⁹⁴ Jen Chi-yü claimed that this idea of reciprocity had been used by the exploiting classes throughout Chinese history to propagate the theory that class-transcending love was a great virtue. In fact, the spirit of reciprocity, like "love men" had been purely between the slave-owners.

92. The Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities, "Lin Piao and the Doctrines of Confucius and Mencius", in ibid., pp. 46-72.

93. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

94. Legge, p. 157.

As long as a system of exploitation is being defended, the exploiters could never carry out 'not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself' in dealings with the exploited. Confucius, who supported the slave system, had never been able to think that since he himself did not want to be a slave, others should also not be allowed to become slaves, or that since he himself did not want to be exploited, so others should also not be allowed to be exploited. Between antagonistic classes, there is no such thing as 'the spirit of reciprocity'. For the labouring people who had been oppressed, the so-called 'spirit of reciprocity' was a thoroughly hypocritical thing.⁹⁵

It seemed therefore that most emphasis was placed on the hypocritical nature of Confucius' ethics, although it was generally assumed that in his time, he was clearly making a distinction between the class of slaves and the class of slave-owners. In drawing comparisons with the present, the distinction between slaves and slave-owners was of course irrelevant, instead, its essence was universalised as the distinction between the exploited and exploiters. By saying that Confucius had been deceitful in his use of ethical concepts which sounded attractive but were in fact treacherous, the use of jen can be taken out of its historical context and used to analyse the present.

It has often been argued that Confucius had gathered all the old Chou ethical principles together and created a new concept of jen which had been progressive for its time. Yang

95. Jen Chi-yü 任健愈, Chung-kuo che-hs'ueh shih chien-p'ien (Outline of The History of Chinese Philosophy), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1973, pp. 73-74.

Jung-kuo also believed that the origin of jen "can be traced to the ideology of the slave-owning class of the Yin and Chou Dynasties."⁹⁶ However, he did not agree with the view put forward by many writers before the Cultural Revolution that jen was a new concept formulated by Confucius to alleviate the suffering of the slaves. Arguing that the fundamental constituents of jen were filial piety and brotherly duty, two concepts coming from the Chou Dynasty, Yang Jung-kuo believes that these ethical principles had been used as a means of cementing relationships between the different generations of the slave-owning class.⁹⁷ Thus, the fundamental role of jen, when defined as filial piety and brotherly duty, became that of consolidating the slave-owners' rule.

During the May Fourth movement, Lu Hsün had his madman identifying Confucian ethics as meaning literally "eat men". In his time this haunting rendition had taken literally as a question for scholarly investigation by other intellectuals, including Wu Yü. In the fifties and sixties, however, the words "eat men" were not mentioned in the discussions on Confucius. By contrast, the definition of jen as "eat men" was commonly discussed during the anti-Confucius movement, particularly in articles written by non-academics, who generally

96. Yang Jung-kuo, "Confucius - A Thinker Who Stubbornly Supported the Slave System", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Biao and Confucius, Vol. 1, p. 11.

97. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

acknowledged their debt to Lu Hsiin.⁹⁸

However, rather than taking jen as literally meaning cannibalism, most of the contemporary writers used "eat men" in a metaphorical sense, mostly relating it to their own pasts in which it was alleged that through adherence to Confucian morality, former landlords and other feudal elements had caused untold suffering to the people.⁹⁹ By the use of such simple but forceful metaphors, the anti-Confucius movement assessments differed from those made of Confucius in the fifties and sixties in having the flavour of a mass movement.

Perhaps the most important definition of jen that Confucius had given was "restrain oneself and return to the rites." Since it was given to his favourite student Yen Hui, throughout history it has been considered the most basic definition of Confucian ethics. Since it was one of the mottos supposedly found in Lin Piao's room, this definition of jen was also received the most publicity during the campaign.

Yang Jung-kuo gave an interpretation of this definition in which he claimed that in modern terms, the definition

98. See Yü Shen 裕慎, "'Jen' che ch'ih jen" "'仁'者吃人" (The 'benevolent' person eats men), P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung tsa-wen 批林批孔雜文 (Miscellaneous Writings on Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius), Vol. 2, Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974, pp. 77-81.

99. See for example the essays in K'ung-meng chih tao chiu-shih fu-pi chih tao 孔孟之道就是復辟之道 (The Way of Confucius and Mencius is the Way to Restoration), Peking: Chung-kuo ts'ai-cheng ching-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

means to curb your desires, set limits on your actions and return to the system of rites of Yin and Chou slave society.¹⁰⁰

While this interpretation has already been put suggested in the sixties, the implications of it were now explored more fully and imaginatively. Yang stated that the function of curbing one's desires meant that everyone should be content to play the role assigned to him in a slave society so that no one would overstep the limits of their positions in the system. This meant that slaves should be content to be slaves and ministers and officials should be content to remain in a subordinate position to their princes.

However, Yang contended that by the time of Confucius, the slaves were rebelling and some of them had become merchants and were prospering, while many of the officials were usurping the rites of the princes. Thus the rites of slave society were crumbling. This was the reason for Confucius wanting to "restrain oneself and return to the rites." In this, Confucius was adamantly opposed to the reforms which a section of the former slave-owners, the Legalists, had begun to carry out. Their casting of the legal codes onto tripods, for example, would mean that rule by rites (the rites that Confucius wanted to return to) would disappear, to be replaced by rule by law.¹⁰¹

100. Yang Jung-kuo, Confucius, 'Sage' of the Reactionary Classes, p. 25.

101. Ibid., pp. 26-27.

The "rites" were considered to have been a product of slave society. During the anti-Confucius movement, not only were ceremonies such as dancing and observation of a mourning period considered to be rites, but slave sacrifices were also included as part of the rites that Confucius wanted to return to.¹⁰² This was consistent with the image of Confucius as having no compassion.

His advocacy for self-restraint and a return to a more primitive form of society had been "juxtaposed" in allegations that this thinking had continued to influence those who still preached the lessening of class antagonisms and who wanted a return to pre-Cultural Revolution, if not pre-1949, conditions. The restorationist theme became dominant in the anti-Confucius campaign. In articles written by non-academics, there are many personal reminiscences of bitter days before liberation, and strong words of condemnation of those who, like Confucius, was said to have urged a return to a former system. These writings show clearly that this movement was not just one to study China's past, but a political exercise carried out on a mass scale.

After Confucius gave the definition of jen as "restrain oneself and return to the rites", Yen Hui asked for further clarifications and Confucius replied, "Look not at what is

102. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

contrary to the rites; do not listen to that is contrary to the rites; do not speak what is contrary to the rites; and make no movement which is contrary to the rites."¹⁰³ Since the rites had now been interpreted as the rites of a slave society, this passage is now interpreted to mean that everything which did not correspond to the Chou rites should be avoided.

One can therefore see that when Confucius proposed jen, it was intended as a moral principle in which to restrict the sight, hearing, speech, and movements of the chün-tzu (upper-class gentlemen) in order to make them obey strictly the hierarchical Chou rites: to consciously abstain from speech and actions which were contrary to the rites; and to guard against behaviour which were not in accordance with the rites or opposed to those above.¹⁰⁴

Jen Chi-yü thus sees the function of jen, like that of chung-yung,¹⁰⁵ as maintaining the hierarchical status quo of a slave society.

Before the Cultural Revolution, many writers argued that the ruling class in China for the last two thousand years had used Confucius' moral teachings to their advantage, advocating such moral principles as "the three bonds in human relationships and five constant virtues" (san-kang wu-ch'ang). While in those days the ruling classes were often considered to have

103. Another version of this translation is found in Legge, pp. 156-157.

104. Jen Chi-yü, Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih chien-p'ien, p. 72.

105. For a discussion of chung-yung, see Cheh Chun, "Confucius' Doctrine of the Mean, a Philosophy of Opposition to Social Change", Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 1, pp. 43-62.

twisted the words of Confucius which had been progressive for his time, during the seventies it was said that the reactionary elements of later interpretations of Confucius' thinking was intrinsic in his own writings.

Books with titles such as Confucius was the Original Teacher of Counter-Revolution and Restoration appeared.¹⁰⁶ If it was argued that Confucius had been a defender of the slave system against feudal thought, then the question of how his thinking could be later used by the feudal rulers had to be answered. The philosophy students of Peking University gave several reasons why a slave morality could be used and praised in a feudal society.

Firstly, it was claimed that the nature of the feudal landlord class had itself changed. From being the revolutionary class in the decline of the slave system, it had changed by the Han Dynasty to being reactionary. While under the slave society they were on the ascendancy, by the time they gained power, the problem they were most concerned with was not how to change society, but how to exploit the peasants and how to consolidate their rule. They saw that Confucius' thinking could help in consolidating the rule of feudal society, and so they began to

106. Pei-ching ta-hsüeh che-hsüeh-hsi ch'i-ling chieh kung-nung-ping hsbeh-yüan 北京大学哲学系七五工农兵学员
K'ung-tzu shih fan-ke-ming fu-pi te tsu-shih-yeh 孔子是反革命
 复辟的祖师爷 (Confucius was the Original Teacher of Counter-revolution and Restoration), Peking: Jen-min chiao-yu ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

utilise it.¹⁰⁷

Secondly, both feudal society and slave society were founded on the basis of a minority exploiting a majority and private ownership. Even though Confucius' thinking defended slavery, its basic content could similarly be used to defend the exploitation of the peasants by the feudal landlord class.¹⁰⁸ Since both systems were highly hierarchical, teachings such as "the three bonds in human relationships and five constant virtues," with their emphasis on hierarchy, fitting in well with original Confucianism.

Thirdly, both feudal society and slave society were similar in containing sharp class struggles. Confucius had used moral concepts such as "virtue", "benevolence", "loyalty", "Will of Heaven", and so on as weapons to restrict the thinking of the slaves. Tung Chung-shu, who also saw that it was not possible to stop peasant rebellions by the use of force alone, inherited these ideas from Confucius' teachings as ways and means of spiritually oppressing the discontented peasants, crippling their thinking faculties and making them obedient servants of the landlord class.¹⁰⁹

The inheritance of Confucius' morality which some people had argued for in the fifties and sixties is now not only seen

107. Ibid., p. 63.

108. Ibid., pp. 63-64.

109. Ibid., pp. 64-68.

as possible, but had in fact been carried out and used by people ranging from Liu Shao-chi to Lin Piao. Liu Shao-chi's How To Be A Good Communist had been criticised as a book influenced directly by Confucius' ethical principle of "self-cultivation".¹¹⁰ Lin Piao in the movement was largely attacked for having had the slogan "restrain oneself and return to the rites" displayed in his room, and having talked about the theory of genius. These attacks further illustrate that criticisms of Confucius have been taken out of the academic sphere and into the political one.

Confucius and Education

Criticism of Confucius' educational thought in the seventies pre-dated the anti-Confucius movement. In July 1971, some months before Lin Piao's downfall,¹¹¹ a writing group in Shantung produced an appraisal of Confucian education which, while radically different to the pre-Cultural Revolution evaluations, was very similar to those which followed in 1974.

110. This was done as early as January 1969. See Hua Shih-pin, "Confucianism, Cultivation, Restoration - Liu Shao-ch'i's counter-revolutionary plot against the Party and State as viewed from the 'Cultivation' released three times", Survey of China Mainland Press (Supplement), 1971, No. 293, pp. 1-5.

111. While it is true that Lin Piao had ceased to make public appearances around this time, the claim that Lin Piao had been a Confucianist rested mainly on the discovery of Confucian scrolls in his room after his death, that is, several months after this article was written.

The article began by linking Confucius' ideas on education with the "revisionist" line in education, stating

For a long time in the past, the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and other sham Marxists pushed a counter-revolutionary revisionist line on China's educational front. One of their main theoretical pillars was Confucius' thinking on education which, having dominated China for more than 2,000 years, had a very deep and widespread influence. To deepen the revolution in China's education, it is necessary to thoroughly criticise this reactionary thinking.¹¹²

The appearance of this article suggests that proposals to criticise Confucius' ideas on education had been put forward quite independently of the decision to criticise Lin Piao, although the article was not followed by further discussion at that time.

Essentially the same kind of rationale for the need to criticise Confucius' ideas on education was given in 1974 at the beginning of the campaign, when the mass criticism group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities stated that

the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius had left widespread pernicious influence on the educational field. They are the spiritual pillar of the revisionist line as well as the ideological weapon for the bourgeoisie to carry out its restorationist activities. They have chained the minds of many people, hampering the development in depth of the proletarian educational revolution. In order to further smash the 'golden rules' of the old educational system, the movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius must lead to a deeper and wider revolution in the educational system, the contents

112. The Writing Group of the Shantung Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, "A Criticism of Confucius' Thinking on Education", Peking Review, 17 September 1971, No. 38, p. 6. (Originally in JMJP, 19 July 1971.)

and methods of teaching, and the teacher-student relationships, thereby paving the way for the growth of socialist new-born things.¹¹³

There are two basic differences between the 1971 and 1974 articles. When the earlier article links Confucius' ideas to intra-party struggle, it is with Liu Shao-ch'i's name, and not with Lin Piao. The later article not only makes a link between Lin Piao and Confucius but also places more emphasis on the question of restoration, in line with the general theme of the anti-Confucius movement.

Articles and books written on Confucian education in the seventies can be divided into several types. Some were particularly concerned with repudiating arguments put forward in praise of Confucius during the fifties and sixties. Others attacked Confucian ideas which were thought to still have a negative influence on education. A third kind of articles was concerned with criticising later writings which had a Confucian base. The extensive criticism of the children's text, the San-tzu ching, fits into this category.¹¹⁴

113. Ch'ing-hua ta-hsüeh ke-ming wei-yüan-hui 清華大學革命委員會
Pei-ching ta-hsüeh ke-ming wei-yüan-hui 北京大學革命委員會
"P'i-Lin p'i-K'ung yün-tung t'ui-tung chiao-yü ke-ming shen-ju fa-chan" 批林批孔運動推動教育革命深入發展
(The Movement to Criticise Lin Piao and Confucius Pushes the Educational Revolution to Develop in Depth), HC, 1974, No. 5.
Reprinted in P'i-lin p'i-k'ung yün-tung t'ui-tung chiao-yü ke-ming shen-ju fa-chan, Shensi: Shen-hsi jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974, p. 3.

114. At least six books have been written solely on criticising the San-tzu ching 三字經. For example, Shanghai ti-wu kang-t'i ch'ang kung-jen hsieh-tso-chu 上海第五鋼鐵廠工人學校
San-tzu ching shih p'ien-jen ching 《三字經》是騙人經
(The Three Character Text is a Deceptive Text), Shanghai: Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

Relating Confucian ideas to current practice was not new, but in the fifties and sixties this had usually been in the context of arguing that Confucian educational ideas were not incompatible with modern practice, with the aim being more to preserve Confucius' reputation as an educator than to add to an understanding of the ways in which his ideas still affected educational practice. The anti-Confucius movement offered a new approach by seeking to show how traditional ideas hampered the implementation of modern educational practice and in singling out a number of these ideas which particularly needed to be criticised and changed.

Why was there generally felt to be no reason to criticise Confucian ideas on education in the fifties and sixties, and yet an urgent need to attack them in the seventies? This change can be partially explained by the changes that had occurred in the educational system. While the general aims and policies in education in the early sixties placed great hopes on the training of educated and talented groups who would modernise the country, aims and policies which were not fundamentally different to Confucian educational theories, the kind of educational policy which was introduced during the Cultural Revolution conflicted not only with the educational ideas of the early sixties, but was also radically different to Confucian tradition. It was this change in policy which led to a criticism of Confucian ideas.

During the Cultural Revolution, stress was placed on analysing education had been analysed in terms of the class it served. It was argued that education had a political nature, making it impossible to continue to say, as many had in the fifties and early sixties, that Confucius had been an educator of the whole people. With that argument now rejected by the Marxist analysis of class, the question that now would logically be raised was that of what class Confucius' educational thinking had served.¹¹⁵

In the Cultural Revolution, schools were criticised for adopting an overly academic approach and placing "intellectual education first." Red Guards emphasised that the source of knowledge was not books but practice. The curriculum of the post-Cultural Revolution period placed more emphasis on political education and productive labour. The role of the teacher had also changed and with it teacher-student relationships.¹¹⁶

115. Articles and books with titles stating that he was a teacher of the reactionary classes were very common. For example, Kuang-tung shih-fan hsiieh-yüan chiao-yü hsiieh-chiao yen-chiu shi chiao-yü shih chu 廣東師範學院教育學教研室教育史觀 Fan-tung chieh-chi te chih-sheng hsien-shih - K'ung Ch'iu 反動階級的偉大教師——孔子 (The 'Greatest Sage and Teacher' of the Reactionary Classes - Confucius), Kwangtung: Kwangtung jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1974.

116. The issue of teacher-student relationships was brought up through a letter written by a Peking school-girl, Huang Shuai 黃帥, at the end of 1973. "I-ko hsiiao-hsiieh-sheng te lai-hsin he jih-chi che-ch'ao" 一個小學生的來信和日記摘錄 "Letters and Excerpts from a Diary of a Primary School Pupil", JMF, 28 December 1973.

The teacher was no longer to be the "center", and in universities academics were to share their tasks with workers and peasants. With the greater emphasis on education serving politics, students were encouraged to study for the revolution and to volunteer to go to rural areas to become workers and peasants. All these changes represented radical departures from traditional thinking. If these policies were to be maintained and the old system not restored, the criticism of tendencies which worked against these "new-born things" would be necessary. While during the Cultural Revolution the emphasis had been in the criticism of bourgeois ideas, attention was now turned to traditional thought.

Criticism began with attacks on the idea that Confucius had been China's foremost educator. Unless this kind of belief was attacked, criticism of more specific instances of Confucius' ideas would be difficult. The People's Daily on 27 September 1973 carried the first two articles published in the anti-Confucius movement dealing with Confucius' ideas on education. They dealt with the two related questions of whether Confucius had founded a private school and whether he had been an educator of the whole people.

Confucius' reputation as a paragon of teachers rested largely on the assertion that he had been as the first to establish a private school he had extended education. Even those writers who in the early sixties were critical of Confucius had agreed

that in this he had made an important contribution to education. T'ang Hsiao now argued that Confucius had in fact been only one of a number of people who had established private schools around this period. Amongst others teaching privately at the same time were Shao-cheng Mao, whom it was recorded attracted away many of Confucius' students. Teng Hsi, who taught law and who accepted garments as payment and Wang T'ai, who was said to have had as many followers as Confucius. Confucius himself had studied the lute under Shih Hsiang, sought advice on the rites from Lao-tzu, studied administration under T'an-tzu and music under Ch'ang Hung.¹¹⁷ From this evidence, T'ang concluded that not only had private schools existed during Confucius' time, but also before he had begun teaching.

Rather than explaining the rise of private schools in China at that time as the result of the actions of one man, Confucius, T'ang Hsiao gave a historical explanation in terms of the changing social situation. He contended that with the social upheavals at the time, scholarship and culture had begun to decline, with many scholars who had formerly served in the courts leaving the palaces, where the official schools had been situated. Intellectuals began instead to set up private schools. At that time, both the newly-arisen feudal landlord class and the declining slave-owning aristocrats needed intellectuals and

117. T'ang Hsiao 湯暘, "Po K'ung-tzu shou-ch'uang ssu-hsüeh shuo" 孔子創私學說 (Repudiating that Confucius was 'the Founder of a Private Education'), JMJP, 27 September 1973.

scholars to create public opinion in their favour, so that private schools of all types had an opportunity to grow. Confucius' school was just one of these. Even granted that Confucius had been amongst the first to found a private school, T'ang Hsiao argued that the purpose of his school should also be considered in deciding whether Confucius should be honoured for this. Since Confucius' school had been in the service of the slave-owning class, T'ang asked why had he been honoured over the centuries. He first queried whether this meant that those people who over the centuries had honoured Confucius as a teacher had simply lacked historical knowledge. On the contrary, he argued, it was because Confucius' education had served reactionary politics, that he had been revered by those who wanted to use his educational ideas for similar purposes.¹¹⁸

During the early sixties several articles had also praised Confucius for being an educator of the whole people. In 1974, T'ang Hsiao-wen re-examined this question, arguing that since Confucius had lived in the slave era, to say that Confucius had recruited students regardless of class would have to mean that he had recruited them from the broad masses of society of that time, that is, from the slaves. In a society in which slaves were not regarded as human beings and could be sold and brought at will, T'ang questioned whether it was likely that the slaves would have been given an education.¹¹⁹ He quoted from the Analects.

118. Ibid.

119. T'ang Hsiao-wen, "Was Confucius 'an Educator of the Whole People'?", Translated in Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao and Confucius, Vol. 1, pp. 63-87.

those born with knowledge rank highest. Those who acquire knowledge through learning rank lower. Those who have difficulty and refuse to learn are the lowest - the common people.¹²⁰

He argued that this showed that Confucius had excluded the slaves from those to be educated, since in Confucius' view, the slaves being the "lowest" and the "stupid" were not worth educating. Confucius had believed that slaves should do what they were told without being given reasons.¹²¹

In the sixties, a number of writers had interpreted Confucius' saying "teaching without distinction of classes" (yu chiao wu lui) as evidence that he had been prepared to teach all people.¹²² T'ang Hsiao-wen re-interpreted this phrase to suggest instead that Confucius had meant teaching without distinction of clans. He argued that in Confucius' time a very stratified class system had existed, reflected in Confucius' own concern with the proper ordering of social relations, thus making it doubtful that Confucius would have argued for a "breaking down of class barriers in education." Subjecting the phrase to semantic analysis, and using Chao Chi-pin's distinction between jen and min, T'ang argued that Confucius had used two terms, hui and chiao to refer to teaching.¹²³ Chiao with min, the class of slaves, while hui had referred to

120. From the Analects, "Chi Shih" 季氏, Translation from ibid., p. 67.

121. Ibid., p. 70.

122. The Chinese characters for yu chiao wu lui are as follows:

有教无类

123. The Chinese characters for jen, min, hui, and chiao are follows: 人, 民, 诲, 教

teaching in the broader sense of education, and had been used by Confucius in connection with jen, meaning human being. The content of chiao involved compulsory military training and ideological indoctrination and was quite different from that of the education of the slave-owners and aristocrats.

T'ang Hsiao-wen also argued that in ancient times, yu was used interchangeably with other words meaning region, and that lui referred to different clans. Thus, what Confucius really wanted in this formula was to give the slaves compulsory training which was not divided according to clans, but based on the regions in which they lived.¹²⁴

Confucius having said that he would teach anyone who brought him a bundle of dried meat was also quoted before the Cultural Revolution as evidence that he had been prepared to teach all classes. In the seventies, this was also given a different interpretation. T'ang Hsiao-wen argued that in a society where one horse and a hank of silk could be bartered for five slaves, and in which slaves were human chattels to be bought or sold, no slave could possibly have been able to obtain the meat to pay the tuition fee.¹²⁵ A third line of evidence which had been put forward to support the claim that Confucius had been prepared to teach all classes was the argument that his students had included many poor people. Now, however, it

124. T'ang Hsiao-wen, "Was Confucius 'an Educator of the Whole People'?", p. 76.

125. Ibid., p. 69.

was argued that students like Yen Hui, who had "lived in a dilapidated hut," and Tseng Shen, who had "hoed melon fields with his father," came from families who had previously been wealthy and influential, but whose fortunes had declined. While "poor" compared to the slave-owning aristocrats, they still belonged to this class. Similarly with Jan Yung's father who had been a "commoner": this was interpreted as having only meant that he had not held an official post. Tzu-kung's father, who had been described as a tradesman, was now said to have been a commercial slave-owner. T'ang Hsiao-wen concluded that at best if Confucius had "chosen students irrespective of high or low birth" this could only mean that he had not discriminated between people from both official and non-official families of social status other than slaves.¹²⁶

In line with the more vigorous application of Marxist analysis, a number of articles took up the question of whether Confucius as an educator had separated himself from politics. Just as restoration was seen to be the core of Confucius' thinking in other fields, it was considered to have been the aim of his educational activity. The Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities declared that Confucius had

devoted his entire life to upholding the disintegrating slave-owning system. His work in education was an important aspect of his activities for counter-revolutionary restoration.¹²⁷

126. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

127. The mass Criticism Group of Tsinghua and Peking Universities, "K'ung-tzu shih tsen-yang li-yung chiao-yü chin-hsing fan ke-ming fu-pi huo-tung te", *JMJP*, 16 January 1974.

Although Confucius had run a private school, they argued that he had not given up his political ambitions, but had made use of education as a tool for waging political struggle. As evidence for this, Confucius was said to have made the comment:

I use filial piety and brotherly love to teach people, and thus exert an influence on those in power. This is also participation in politics. Why must I be an official myself?¹²⁸

Confucius' ethics, the core of his teaching, were considered to have served political aims.

A number of writers in the early sixties had suggested that Confucius' theories on education had included a "materialist factor."¹²⁹ T'ang Hsiao-wen now argued instead that Confucian education had been idealist because it basically neglected social practice as the origin of knowledge. While Confucius had spoken of "those who learn and so readily get knowledge" this knowledge came from sages, "persons of foresight" and those "born with knowledge". What Confucius had meant by the content of study was the study of the odes, of the rites, of truth and letters, through studying the Book of Rites, Book of History, and the Book of Music. The source of knowledge in these books

128. This quote comes from the Analects. The translation here is from the modern version of the article. The Mass Criticism Group of Tsinghua and Peking Universities, "K'ung-tzu shih tsen-yang li-yung chiao-yu chin-hsing fan ke-ming fu-pi huo-tung te" 孔子是怎樣利用教育進行反革命復辟活動的 (How Confucius made Use of Education to Carry out Counter-revolutionary Restorationist Activities), JMJP, 16 January 1974. Legge's translation is "'you are filial, you discharge your brotherly duties. These qualities are displayed in government.' This then also constitutes the exercise of government. Why must there be that - making one be in the government?" (Legge, p. 22).

129. See Feng Yu-lan, "Lun K'ung-tzu", KTCHTLC, pp. 92-93.

was not perceptual experience, but was held to be revelations from Heaven with the yardstick for examining being the mandate of Heaven, rather than practice.¹³⁰

Confucius had also talked about "seeing and hearing a lot" but T'ang argued that by this Confucius had meant passive introspection and observation, rather than active practical activity. Confucius was also criticised as idealist for his theory that "those with knowledge are the highest class of men, while those who are stupid and do not learn are the lowest."¹³¹ This, coupled with his having said that "there are only the wise of the highest class, and the stupid of the lowest class, who cannot be changed."¹³² This was contrasted with Mao's saying that "The lowly are the most intelligent, the elite are the most ignorant."¹³³

Confucian ideas on innate knowledge were also said to have given the ideological foundation for the belief that it was heroes rather than the masses who made history. Che Chün argued that

130. T'ang Hsiao-wen 唐曉文, "K'ung Ch'iu te chiao-yü ssu-hsiang yü k'e-chi fu-li" 孔子的教育思想與"克己復禮" (Confucius' Educational Thought and 'Restrain Oneself and Return to the Rites'), KMJP, 26 May 1974.

131. See Legge, p. 248.

132. Legge, p. 255.

133. This view, which was widely quoted during the Anti-Confucius movement, was first put forward by Mao in 1958, see Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought (1949-1968), Part I, p. 120.

Marxism holds that genius is more-than-average intelligence, a more outstanding ability formed through concentration of the wisdom of the masses on the basis of social practice. Genius depends not on one individual or even several individuals, but on the mass line and collective wisdom ... the 'heaven-endowed ability' that is isolated from practice and the masses is non-existent.¹³⁴

In the fifties and early sixties, Confucius' teaching methods had been praised as "teaching according to the student's ability." Now it was argued that this had meant nothing more than the practice of "education for the talented" on the one hand, and the implementation of the policy of keeping the labouring people ignorant on the other.

Confucius had also been praised before the Cultural Revolution for encouraging students to use deductive reasoning methods because he had said

When I have presented one corner of a subject to anyone, and he cannot learn the other three, I do not repeat my lesson.¹³⁵

Confucius had also said that he sought a general principle by which to interpret things. In the sixties Feng Yu-lan had argued that this general principle had been derived from practice, but in 1975 Feng T'ien-yu argued that the general principle that Confucius had used was jen.¹³⁶ By using jen as the general

134. Che Chun 哲軍, "Ts'ung che-hsüeh-shih k'an t'ien-ts'ai-lun te fan-tung-hsing" 從哲學史看天才論的及動性 (The Reactionary Nature of the Theory of Genius Seen from the History of Philosophy), KMJP, 13 July 1972.

135. Legge, p. 81.

136. Feng T'ien-yu 馮天瑜, K'ung Ch'iu chiao-yü ssu-hsiang, p'i-p'an 孔丘教育思想批判 (A Criticism of Confucius' Educational Thinking), Peking: Jen-min ch'u-p'an-she, 1975.

principle, Confucius had hoped to buttress the declining slave system. Feng T'ien-yu also quoted a number of other passages from the Analects to suggest that Confucius had demanded obedience from his students, who were not given the freedom to think independently, or to make their own deductions.

Confucian concepts of the teacher-student relationship also came under attack. Traditionally, China had placed emphasis on students showing respect to their teachers. This does not seem to have been seriously challenged until the Cultural Revolution. Even in the early sixties it had been claimed that this was a concept which still had relevance for contemporary times. During the Cultural Revolution, students openly criticised their teachers, reversing this. The model advocated immediately after the Cultural Revolution was of a democratic teacher-student relationship, and it was in terms of this that Confucian ideas on the teacher-student relationship were now to be re-evaluated.

Several points were mentioned to illustrate that Confucius had advocated an authoritarian conception of the teacher-student relationship. Confucius had said that the relationship between the teacher and student should be like that between ruler and subject, prince and minister, father and son; that is, it was one of the inviolable principles of human relationships. Illustrations were also drawn from Confucius' own life. He had wanted to expel his student Jan Ch'iu for disagreeing with

his principles; ordered Tzu Kung to leave for questioning the execution of Shao-cheng Mao; and called Fan Ch'ih a small man for wanting to learn farming. This was taken to show that any student who expressed scepticism or disagreed with Confucius' ideas was rebuked or expelled.¹³⁷

Criticism of Confucian educational ideas was also motivated by a need to criticise those ideas which were still influential and which threatened to undermine the changes carried out in education after the Cultural Revolution. Many Confucian sayings had of course passed into ordinary speech. Of all the Confucian aphorisms which were attacked, most attention was directed to "one who excels in learning can be an official."¹³⁸ This had been put forward by Confucius' disciple Tzu Hsia, but Confucius himself had expressed a similar idea when he said "there is ploughing - even in that there is sometimes want. So with learning - emolument may be found in it."¹³⁹ Such ideas were very different from the idea of studying for the revolution, and of being willing to become an ordinary worker or peasant after graduation.

137. Liao-ning shih-fan hsiieh-yüan ta p'i-p'an-tsu 遼寧師範學院大批判週 "Shih-tao tsun-yen' shih wei 'k'e-chi fu-li' fu-wu te" 師道尊嚴是為克己復禮服務的 ('Dignity of Teachers and Principles' is for serving 'to Restrain oneself and Return to the Rites'), KMJP, 17 May 1974.

138. See Legge, p. 291.

139. Legge, p. 232.

Tung Wen-hsiao argued that Confucius had propagated the idea of studying to become an official in order to rescue the disintegrating slave society of the time. The thought of "one who excels in learning can be an official" had then been inherited by later reactionary classes, who looked upon education as an important ladder for them to climb upwards.¹⁴⁰

After the Cultural Revolution, productive labour had been emphasised in schools, so not surprisingly Confucius was also criticised for having refused to teach productive labour. The example often used was concerned the occasion when Fan Ch'ih had asked to be taught husbandry and Confucius had called him a mean man. Confucius' move to stifle the learning of husbandry was seen as not just question of whether to take up agriculture, but also a reflection of the struggle between the two political lines at that time. Fan Ch'ih's desire to learn husbandry was interpreted as a movement for the reform of education, which because it broke away from Confucius' educational ideas, threatened Confucius' political aims. Thus after berating Fan Ch'ih, Confucius had begun to talk of "propriety", "righteousness" and "good faith" to fetter other students.¹⁴¹

140. Tung Wen-hsiao 佟聞曉, "'Hsüeh erh yü tse shih' te fan-tung chiao-yü ssu-hsiang pi-shui p'i-p'an" 學而優則仕的反動教育思想之批判 "The Reactionary Thought of 'One Who Excels in Learning Can Be An Official' in Education Must Be Criticised and Repudiated", JMJP, 16 January 1974.

141. Chang Wei-hsin 張維新, "Fan Ch'ih hsüeh-chia shih ke-hsin hsing-tung" 樊遲學稼是革新行動 (Fan Ch'ih's Demand to Learn Husbandry was a Reformist Action), JMJP, 26 January 1974.

Historical Interpretation After the Fall of the "Gang of Four"

With the arrest of Chiang Ch'ing, Wang Hung-wen, Yao Wen-yüan and Chang Ch'un-ch'iao,¹⁴² a month after the death of Mao, China entered a new period characterised by more moderate policies which placed a greater emphasis on agricultural and industrial production than on political struggle. Their arrest also portended further changes in historical interpretation. It was this group which had been largely responsible for the kind of approach to history which called for a "most radical rupture with traditional ideas"¹⁴³ exemplified by the total rejection and repudiation of Confucius. Clearly they had had considerable control over the anti-Confucius movement and over the field of historical interpretation as a whole. Not surprisingly, articles written on history since the Cultural Revolution came under close scrutiny.

Media under the control of the gang of four soon came under attack. The Shanghai-based journal Study and Criticism, which had brought out some of the pioneering articles during

142. Mao had apparently advised these four people not to form a "ssu-jen pang" (gang of four). This label is now used to refer to them and their followers. It will be adopted from here on for the sake of brevity.

143. This quote, which comes from the Manifesto of the Communist Party, was used frequently during the anti-Confucius movement. For example, the title of the well-publicised movie Ch'üeh Lieh 天裂 (The Break) comes from this quote. The translation is from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Selected Works, Vol. 1, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, p. 126.

the anti-Confucius movement, was withdrawn from sale immediately after their arrest. It was criticised for having propagated the theory that history was a struggle between the Legalists and Confucianists, and for having been used as a base for launching attacks on Chou En-lai.¹⁴⁴ Those in charge of the journal were accused of having set it up in opposition to Red Flag, the official organ of the Central Committee, and of having released state secrets.¹⁴⁵

The journal Historical Research was also criticised, but did not share the fate of Study and Criticism.¹⁴⁶ It continued to appear but under new editorship. The leading articles of the last issue of 1976 were devoted to attacks on articles it had previously published, combined with a criticism of the gang of four. The four were accused of having delayed the reappearance of the journal which had been suspended during the Cultural Revolution, despite a directive issued by Mao as early

144. Ch'en Chung 陳中, "Pa 'ssu-jen pang' tsa-chih hsieh-hsi yü p'i-p'an ya-shang shen-p'an-t'ai - ch'ing-suan hsieh-hsi yü p'i-p'an kung-chi Chou tsung-li te tsui-heng" 把"四人幫"新造《學習與批判》押上高台之一(評定《學習與批判》攻擊周總理的罪行) (Send the Journal of the Gang of Four, Study and Criticism, to the Courtroom - Expose the Crimes of Study and Criticism in its Attacks on Premier Chou), LSYC, 1977, No. 1, pp. 29-39.

145. Ibid., p. 29.

146. Li-shih yen-chiu Editorial Board, "Li-shih yen-chiu te tsao-yü ho 'ssu-jen pang' li-yung li-shih fan-tang te yin-mou" 《歷史研究》的曹易和"四人幫"利用歷史反黨的陰謀 (The Misfortunes met by Historical Research and the "Gang of Four's" Plot in Using History to Oppose the Party), LSYC, 1976, No. 6, pp. 6-10.

as April 1973 saying that the journal should resume publication.¹⁴⁷ It was not until late 1974, when they realised that it could be used for ulterior purposes, that it reappeared under the control of their followers. Seeing that history could be used to launch an attack on Chou En-lai, Chiang Ch'ing herself was said to have assumed the dignified air of a historian, and talked about "making the past serve the present."¹⁴⁸

Besides denouncing these journals which had been amongst the most important of those which carried articles on Confucius in the last few years, two of the writing groups which had been at the forefront of the criticisms of Confucius also came under attack. In Peking, the Mass Criticism Group of Peking and Tsinghua Universities had written many articles during the anti-Confucius movement, mainly using the pseudonym Liang Hsiac, but also under at least a dozen other pen-names. In Shanghai, a second mass criticism group had operated under such pseudonyms as Lo Ssu-ting and K'ang Li. Both groups were likened to the "north gate scholars" who under the Empress Wu of the T'ang dynasty gained

147. Ibid., p. 6. Mao apparently also gave the instruction that Philosophical Research should resume publication. Since the gang of four were supposed to have obstructed this, now that they are gone, the journal may reappear.

148. Ou Mei, "Chiang Ch'ing and 'Weeding Out Undesirable Elements Close to the Emperor'", JMJP, 12 January 1977. Translation from Survey of People's Republic of China Press, 1977, No. 6273, pp. 126-129.

entrance to the forbidden palace through the north gate and who had drafted essays, papers and memoirs to help her preserve her power.¹⁴⁹

Liang Hsiao was particularly attacked over two articles: "That Man Confucius" and "More on That Man Confucius". These had claimed that Confucius, after he became acting prime minister of the state of Lu, had called back to office those who had fallen into obscurity in an attempt to help the declining slave-owning aristocrats form a restorationist force. Liu Yüan-yen and Yüan Shu-chüan now disputed the historical accuracy of this claim, arguing that the only concrete evidence that Liang Hsiao had been able to produce was to cite Confucius' removal of the grave of Duke Chao of Lu to his ancestors' burial grounds. While not rejecting the claim that Confucius had been a restorationist, it did challenges one of the claims on which this argument was based.¹⁵⁰ Liang Hsiao's real motive, they claimed, had been to launch attacks on Chou En-lai, and then after his death, on Hua Kuo-feng. In this way,

Under the gang of four and the scribblers in their pay, Confucius of more than two thousand years ago was a pseudonym with which they attacked by insinuation contemporary people. They wanted to knock down this

149. Li-shih yen-chiu Editorial Board, "T'ung-ta luo-shui kou Liang Hsiao, Lo Ssu-ting" 痛打落水狗梁效斌遺稿 (Hit Hard at Liang Hsiao and Lo Ssu-ting, Dogs That Have Fallen into the Water), LSYC, 1976, No. 6, p. 14.

150. Liu Yüan-yen and Yüan Shu-chüan, "Commenting on 'More on That Man Confucius'", JMJP, 30 December 1976. Translation from Survey of People's Republic of China Press, 1977, No. 6261, pp. 68-71.

person today, and then this person was "Confucius". They want to knock down that person tomorrow, and that person would be Confucius ... they invariably took Confucius as a lump of clay to mould at their will a double of that person in the contemporary era according to their needs.¹⁵¹

Another example cited of the way in which attacks on Confucius was said to have been aimed at Chou En-lai was an article by K'ang Li in which the Confucian maxim "They are determined to be sincere in what they say, and carry out what they do" was discussed.¹⁵² This is now considered to have been an oblique attack on Chou En-lai over agreements he made with Nixon in 1972.¹⁵³

Corresponding to the attacks made on the gang of four for their alleged criticisms of Chou En-lai, Chou himself has been posthumously elevated to a status almost as high as Mao. Besides praise for his role in the Chinese revolution,¹⁵⁴ he has been lauded for his part in the May Fourth movement. With his wife Teng Ying-chao, he had helped to organise the Awakened Society, a radical student group which took the elimination of old ethics and morality as one of its basic aims.¹⁵⁵ The

151. Ibid.

152. Translation from Legge, pp. 186-187.

153. Ch'en Chung, "Pa 'ssu-jen-pang' tsa-chih Hsüeh-hsi yü p'i-p'an ya-shang shen-p'an-t'ai", p. 32.

154. See for example Yen T'ai-lung 顏太龍, "Wei-ta te chan-shih, huo-jih te tou-cheng" 偉大的戰士火熱的鬥爭 (A Great Warrior, A Fiery Struggle), ISYC, 1977, No. 1, pp. 3-15.

155. Ting Chiang-hai 丁江海 et al., "Chou En-lai t'ung-chih te tsou-ch'i ke-ming huo-tung" 周恩來同志的早期革命活動 (The Early Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Chou En-lai), ibid., pp. 16-28.

Tientsin Students' Union Journal edited by Chou had issued a call for the criticism of old morality, customs and habits. This is now seen as equivalent to attacks on Confucianism. Chou was also said to have supported the women's emancipation movement, which is seen as having dealt a direct blow to Confucianism.¹⁵⁶ The fact that Chou himself has been praised for attacking Confucianism suggests that the present leadership remains committed to anti-Confucianism, at least for the time being.

Besides objecting to the mis-use of the anti-Confucius movement for political ends, a claim has also been made on theoretical grounds that the movement was too extreme and too sweeping in its rejection of Chinese tradition. The four were accused of completely negating Mao's instruction calling for the critical inheritance of China's cultural legacy.¹⁵⁷ Most importantly, they were accused of having distorted Marxist class analysis in the portrayal of the struggle between the Legalists and Confucianists.

On one side of the struggle, there were those ranging from Kuan Chung and Shang Yang, through Empress Lü, Wu Tse-t'ien and Chang T'ai-yen, to the contemporary "gang of four". All these people were without exception crowned with laurels made by Chiang's cap factory for those who were patriotic, cherished the people, were oppressed, rose from the basic level, were promising, killed fewer people, and practiced

156. Ibid.

157. Hong Kong Ta-kung pao 大公报, 15 March 1977.

materialism. On the other side of the struggle, there were the Confucianists ranging from Confucius and Mencius, through Tung Chung-shu, Szu-ma Kuang, the two Ch'eng brothers and Chu Hsi, right down to the so-called "Confucianists" of the socialist era and the "Confucianists" in the Party In the eyes of Chiang Ch'ing and her gang, the hundreds of peasant insurgents, big and small ranging from Ch'en Sheng and Wu Kuang to the T'ai'ping insurgents, only played the role of utility men tagging after the Legalists and paving the way for the "Legalists to mount the stage to come into power."¹⁵⁸

They were thus accused of having ignored the primary role of the masses, whom Mao had referred to as the makers of history.

Articles now began to argue that since the Legalists had been representatives of the landlord class, on the basis of class analysis, it would be incorrect to picture them as working for the interests of the slaves and peasants. Ch'in Shih-huang, who had been the subject of uncritical acclaim during the anti-Confucius movement was still praised for his role in unifying China, but at the same time was considered to have developed into a tyrant who oppressed the people in his later years. The building of luxurious palaces and tombs were cited to support the charge that he had oppressed the masses for his own personal enjoyment.¹⁵⁹ To some extent,

158. Mass Criticism Group of the Institute of History of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, "On Chiang Ch'ing's Talks at Tientsin", KMJ, 3 March 1977. Translation from Survey of People's Republic of China Press, 1977, No. 6307, p. 166.

159. Chu-ko Chi 计葛, "Po 'ssu-jen pang' tsai nung-min chang-cheng wen-t'i shang te fan Ma-ke-ssu chu-i miou-lun" 反“四人帮”在农民战争问题上的反马克思主义谬论 (Repudiate the Gang of Four's Absurd Anti-Marxist Theories on the Question of the Peasant Wars), ISYC, 1977, No. 1, pp. 48-49.

there has been a return to traditional interpretations of his life, with references to his meting out corporal punishment of various kinds, and the launching of a series of ill-fated expeditions to search for the immortals.

The four are accused of having propagated the theory that heroes make history through their elevation of the Legalists. The new interpretation considers that although there was conflict between the Legalist and Confucian schools of thought, both were the product of the exploiting classes. Their disputes thus represented conflict not between representatives of the oppressed and the oppressors, but between two competing exploiting classes. This is then a fundamentally different kind of struggle to that between the proletariat and the capitalist classes, and any analogy to contemporary events was thus inappropriate.¹⁶⁰

Discussion of historical interpretation since the arrest of the gang of four has so far only charged them with having "falsely criticised Confucius."¹⁶¹ Mao is still acknowledged as having initiated the anti-Confucius movement, with the four accused of having "hurriedly taken over the banner and stealthily

160. Wu Chiang 吳江, "Fa-chia hsüeh-shuo te li-shih yen-pien" (The Changes in History of the Teachings of the Legalists), *ibid.*, 1976, No. 6, p. 55.

161. P'ang P'o 龐朴, "P'ing 'ssu-jen pang' te chia p'i-K'ung" (A Critique of the Gang of Four's False Criticism of Confucius), *ibid.*, pp. 37-42.

added their own black material."¹⁶² This would suggest that while historical interpretations may change on some issues connected with ancient times, it is unlikely in the near future that the verdict on Confucius will be reversed, except in the even more unlikely event of a criticism of Mao Tse-tung.

Concluding Remarks

The period after the Cultural Revolution displayed a marked break with the early communist period. Continuing to build on guidelines laid down during the Cultural Revolution itself, the anti-Confucius movement launched a thorough attack on Confucius, which admitted no compromise. To find parallels, it is necessary to go back to the May Fourth movement. However, while the bitterness of the denunciations has much in common with the earlier period, there are also several significant differences.

May Fourth attacks had for the most part concentrated on Confucianism, rather than Confucius. Indeed some of the critics at that time had believed that Confucius' original ideas had been distorted over the centuries, and that this was the reason for the backwardness of China at the time. During the anti-Confucius movement of the seventies, on the other hand, the blame was laid directly on Confucius himself. Later

162. The Mass Criticism Group of the Revolutionary Committee of Shantung Province, "P'i-p'an, hai-shih feng-hsing" "批判"還是奉行 ('Criticism', or Carrying Out An Order?), HQ, 1977, No. 4, p. 45.

Confucianism, it was held, was quite consistent with the ideas Confucius had put forward. There were, of course, differences too in the kind of language used, and the standard by which Confucius was measured. For the May Fourth writers, it was western liberalism; during the anti-Confucius movement, it was Marxist theories.

Notwithstanding this, similarities are still apparent between the two periods, despite their being separated by over fifty years. When the anti-Confucius movement referred favourably to writers of the past on Confucius, it was almost inevitably from the May Fourth era, most notably Lu Hsiün.¹⁶³ Both had something of the nature of a mass movement, although the May Fourth campaign was restricted largely to the educated, and the movement in the seventies was mainly launched by guidance from above. Both came at a time when radical change was envisaged for China: the May Fourth intellectuals had sought to radically change China by a process of westernisation while the Cultural Revolution was seen as another major attempt in totally instilling a new ideology into the Chinese consciousness.

163. Some of the other May Fourth intellectuals such as Hu Shih and Ch'en Tu-hsiu, however, have been identified as being bourgeois in their criticisms of Confucius. See Chung-kuo chin-tai-shih ts'ung-shu p'ien-hsieh-tsu 《中國近代史叢書》編輯
寫明
與儒法爭鋒 (The Bourgeoisie and the Confucian-Legalist Debates), Hsiieh-hsi yü p'i-p'an, 1973, No. 3, pp. 15-23.

The three major areas examined in the chapters on communist evaluations of Confucius each displayed a marked contrast between theories offered during the anti-Confucius movement, and those put forward during the fifties and sixties.

In the fifties and sixties, there was a considerable diversity of opinions on the question of what class Confucius had come from, and which class interests he represented. During the anti-Confucius movement one viewpoint was accepted. Following the adoption of Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation scheme, the traditionally accepted view that Confucius had come from a declining aristocratic family led to the conclusion that Confucius had been on the side of the slave-owning aristocracy. This basic viewpoint was to determine many of the other attitudes adopted toward Confucius. Beginning with the view that his class standpoint had been to preserve the rule of the slave-owners, all his actions were seen as being directed towards that end.

This was noticeable in the assessments of Confucius' ideas on ethics and education. Concepts like filial piety, jen, and respect for teachers were all considered to be directed towards his restorationist actions. During the fifties and sixties, Confucius had been almost universally lauded for his contributions to education, but after the changes in education during the Cultural Revolution, his ideas were totally rejected. Confucius' ethical principles have also been totally repudiated.

This was very different to the fifties and sixties when older scholars in particular had argued for the inheritability of some of these principles.

In comparison with the fifties and sixties, what stands out in the anti-Confucius movement is the uniformity of viewpoint. Writings were much more overtly political, particularly in the connection drawn between Lin Piao and Confucius. This same uniformity at times led to a simplification which reduced the complexity of Chinese history to a struggle between Legalism and Confucianism. The attempt to fit Chinese history to contemporary political issues at times produced historical writing which appeared contrived. Something of a reaction to this use of history seems to have set in after the arrest of the gang of four.¹⁶⁴ Another interpretation of history seems certain to emerge, one which may give a higher status again to China's cultural legacy.

¹⁶⁴. As well as the criticisms of the gang of four's use of the Legalists in the anti-Confucius movement, their alleged misrepresentation of some of the peasant rebellions have also been under attack. See Wu Meng 吳蒙, "'Tao Chih' k'ao-pien" "盜賊考辨" (Textual Analysis of 'Bandit Chih'), LSYC, 1977, No. 2, pp. 81-91.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSION

Problems that have beset China in this century in attempting to decide the place of its heritage continue to remain unresolved. Those who have taken part in the discussions on this topic have agreed that the more valuable parts of China's cultural heritage should be treasured, yet they have also believed that China needs to modernize. How to reconcile these two concerns has been a question which has perplexed the minds of all those who have thought on China's future. How much should be inherited, what should be discarded: opinions on these questions have displayed a diversity of ideas. Central to all efforts to consider the past has been the question of Confucianism.

A number of broad generalisations can be made about evaluations of Confucius in the twentieth century. Firstly, there is the extent to which this has been a controversial issue. Closely associated with the general problem of what should be inherited from China's past, the question of Confucius has been a major focus of attention. The changes in evaluations have been many, linked always with the numerous political changes that have beset China in this century. For Confucius has been above all a political issue. Even in periods where a more scholarly kind of historical interpretation has been the vogue, despite the wealth of detailed research that might emerge,

overall evaluations have still been related to political issues.

This has been a trend not just of the communist period. Beginning with the late Ch'ing reformers, those evaluating Confucius have sought to do so in terms of their political orientation. Men like K'ang Yu-wei sought to reconcile Confucius with their ideas for a new society, in the process moving so far away from traditional interpretations that their views could be considered heretical. In the May Fourth movement there was an outburst of fervour which sought to pin all of China's ills on the Confucian ideology. By the thirties, under Chiang Kai-shek the trend had changed towards preserving more of the past, but it was still linked closely to politics. In a revival of Confucianism in the New Life Movement, Chiang sought to use Confucianism as a political means of welding the nation together.

The association of evaluations of Confucianism and politics reached its peak in the anti-Confucius movement in the seventies. In associating the anti-Confucius campaign with Lin Piao, Confucius was linked directly with contemporary politics, while the thinly veiled attacks on Chou En-lai revealed how much the anti-Confucius movement was used as a political tool. The acknowledgement that Mao Tse-tung had initiated the movement furthermore underlies its political nature.

While the link with political issues was pronounced during the seventies, assessments of Confucius in the fifties and

sixties were by no means immune to political influences, despite the fact that historical scholarship had generally been of a more orthodox kind. Politics decided the overall framework in which Confucius was to be judged. Marxist methods of analysis were laid down as a guideline, although individual historians might seek to find loopholes to allow for more of the traditional interpretations that they were familiar with. Political changes were reflected in the ideas held on Confucius: if this tendency was not so strong, it reflected the fact that the communists had not yet decided how to treat China's past.

These trends are particularly clear in the evaluations of Confucius' ideas on education. When educational policy in the early fifties called for a policy of selecting talented students, then Confucius was praised for having done this; when China recognised the necessity of postponing compulsory education until the economy could be built up, then parallels again were found with Confucius. While in the fifties and sixties the general trend was towards a positive view of Confucius, and efforts were made to find the roots of contemporary educational ideas in Confucius; in the seventies when Confucius was universally condemned, similar attempts were made to attribute to him all of the educational evils.

Generally, the tendency in the twentieth century has been to move further and further away from Confucianism, although

this has been subjected to numerous fluctuations. When the late Ch'ing reformers first began to question orthodox Confucianism, it was within the context of Confucianism itself. When they themselves later began to realize how unintentionally they had undermined the ideology they had sought to protect their reaction was to return to a stout defence of tradition. When the May Fourth generation made their assault on "Confucius' Shop", it was in a society in which Confucianism still provided the basic rationale underlying the social fabric. The vehemence of their attacks though had its effect. By the thirties, Ku Chieh-kang and the "antiquity doubters" had begun to reduce Confucius to the status of a historical personage, like other mortals. No longer was it possible to conceive of him as an "uncrowned king".

The advent of communism went a step further in providing China with a new dominant ideology to replace the old. In the fifties and sixties it seemed possible that Confucianism might still have a place, but it was very much as a secondary ideology. Confucianism, once used as a standard by which to judge other ideologies and ideas, was now reduced to the position of being evaluated according to Marxist criteria. By the seventies, even this minimum respect accorded to Confucius seemed to have disappeared.

Another trend has been to gradually attribute the blame for China's ills to Confucius himself. Even during the May

Fourth period, one of the most radical in China's history, intellectuals tended to make a distinction between Confucianism and Confucius, considering that Confucius' ideas had been distorted over the succeeding centuries. It was a conception not very different to that held by late Ch'ing reformers. In the communist period, the focus of attention has been more on Confucius himself. Although there were still attempts to separate Confucius from Confucianism, generally writers by now felt that they had to argue their positions. On the whole those who praised Confucius were on the defensive. Discussion, too, had moved more from Confucianism and its social ills to an interest in Confucius' time. For the Late Ch'ing thinkers and May Fourth intellectuals, Confucianism had been an ever-present reality; by the communist period, most of those who were writing were scholars, and Confucianism had for them more of an academic interest. In the anti-Confucius movement, for the first time all historians who contributed to the debate held Confucius responsible for Confucianism.

While the trend had been generally to move away from Confucius, there have still been periods when he received considerable praise. Even as late as the early sixties, conferences held on Confucius produced more favourable evaluations than negative ones. What explains these apparent fluctuations? Again, it appears the cause lies in changing social and political conditions. The May Fourth period, the Great Leap

Forward and the Cultural Revolution stand out as the times when there was the greatest call for radical social change. It is in these periods that Confucius was most attacked. The early communist period was by contrast one where, on the whole, more attention was given to building up China again. In such periods of nationalism, Confucius has again been praised. The demand for radical change, especially in the ideological sphere, has been thus linked with anti-Confucianism while a desire for stability has been linked with pro-Confucianism. This seems related to the nature of Confucianism itself. Apart from Kuo Mo-jo, who at one stage suggested that Confucius had been a kind of anarchist revolutionary, most critics have seen him as one who was concerned with preserving the status quo, or who had advocated gradual reform. Those who wanted radical change were thus unlikely to find any base for their ideas in Confucianism.

Within the communist period, a number of changes can be discerned in views on Confucianism. The early fifties represented a transitional period, where at first judging by the lack of new material on Confucius, it seemed that no one was quite sure what to do about him. The Hundred Flowers period showed that Confucianism was still a force to be reckoned with, especially amongst the older intellectuals. The reaction to this followed almost immediately in the Great Leap Forward, when there was an attempt to rid China of the influence of the past in the

slogan "more modern, less ancient." The early sixties saw Confucius once again gained respectability, in a new attempt to find compatibility between communism and Confucianism. This was to be short-lived, as China once again launched into a period of radical change in the Cultural Revolution. Evaluations of Confucius kept pace with these changes, reflected in the differing ideas offered in the three main themes around which the chapters on the communist era have been organised: Confucius' class stand, his ideas on ethics, and his ideas on education.

In the fifties, while it was generally urged that class analysis should be employed in historical studies, what was written on Confucius' class background still remained very inconclusive. Most of the people writing still based their claims on Szu-ma Ch'ien's biography of Confucius, arguing that he had belonged to the upper class, but seldom going beyond this. Far greater attention was given in this period to the more basic question of periodisation.

By the early sixties, more sophistication in the use of class analysis can be discerned. However, there was still a wide diversity of ideas on Confucius' class background, and some writers like Liu Chieh were tentatively suggesting that class analysis could be dispensed with. While there were dissenting voices, most writers argued that Confucius, although coming from the upper classes, had worked on behalf of the people. During the Cultural Revolution, however, widespread criticism

was directed at the notion that a member of the ruling class could make concessions to the lower classes. Acceptance of this viewpoint made it impossible to continue to argue in the manner of the fifties and early sixties. In the anti-Confucius movement, the acceptance of Kuo Mo-jo's periodisation scheme which placed Confucius in the period of the decline of the slave system provided the framework in which a definitive statement could be made on Confucius' class membership. Confucius was said to have belong to the slave-owning class and to have represented the interests of that class. With class analysis acknowledged as the criterion by which to judge history, all of Confucius' thoughts and actions were analysed in terms of which class he served. Since it was agreed that he had belonged to the reactionary class, it followed that all his ideas would also be seen as reactionary.

Confucius' ethical concepts have long been recognised as the core of his thinking. In the fifties, despite the attempts to look at Confucian philosophy in terms of Marxist categories like materialism and idealism, by far the greater attention has been given to such concepts as li and jen. Several noted scholars had tried to argue for the inheritability of Confucian values in a socialist society. In the Hundred Flowers period, Feng Yu-lan first brought up the ideas of abstract inheritance, and despite the criticism meted out to him in the following two years, he resurrected the same idea in a different guise

in the early sixties. This attempt to reconcile China's past with contemporary life coincided with the renewed nationalism that accompanied the break with the Soviet Union. During this period, while a few people voiced criticism of some Confucian concepts, evaluations on the whole were favourable. The Cultural Revolution slogan of getting rid of the "four olds" represented a determined effort to reduce the influence of tradition. In the anti-Confucius movement, Confucian ethics were considered to be thoroughly evil. The bitterness of the attacks paradoxically revealed the extent to which Confucian ethics were still popularly held in China.

Views on Confucius' educational ideas display a similar trend. Before the Cultural Revolution they were lauded almost universally, but afterwards there was a complete reversal of opinion as all those who had written before renounced their former ideas. The intervention of the Cultural Revolution was decisive. The changes which were envisaged for education differed markedly from Confucian ideas.

Despite the intensity of the attacks on Confucius in the seventies, it would seem that a country's past cannot be put into a museum and forgotten simply by the will of a government or the pen of an intellectual. This is especially so for China, which has such a long and continuous tradition. This also helps to explain why the debates on Confucius in the last century went beyond scholarly exchanges. The passion and diversity of

voices raised reflected the turbulence the Chinese had experienced over this period. It appears from the controversies in the last few years that despite twenty odd years of communist rule, tradition still has an influence, and that Confucius is likely to remain a controversial issue in future.

This thesis has sought to examine the history of changes in evaluations of Confucius in the twentieth century. The focus has been on the views that China's intellectuals have held about Confucius. I have not attempted to evaluate the historical Confucius myself. This question has brought forth a variety of answers from some of China's most noted scholars. K'ang Yu-wei, Hu Shih, Ch'en Tu-hsiu, Feng Yu-lan, Yang Jung-kuo have all produced their own distinctive interpretations, reflecting the difficulty of approaching this question. For Confucius, it seems, has been all things to all men.

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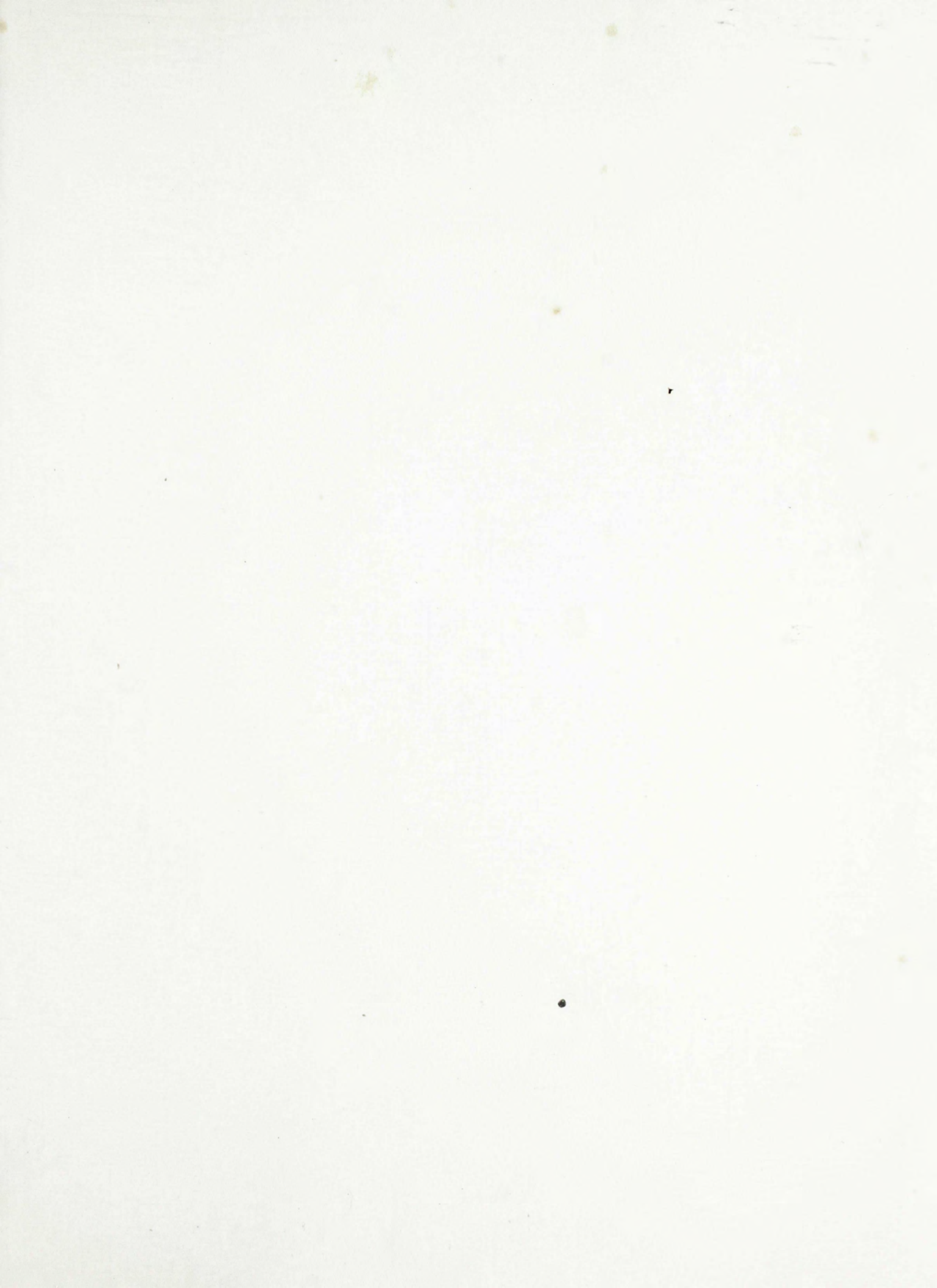
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